

# THE PUBLIC HOUSE IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY

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# Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore and understand how people perceive and experience the village pub. There has, over the course of time, been a general decline in the social and economic importance of the village pub as well as in their number. The decline in number has accelerated in recent years and been the focus of much media attention with some reports claiming that it has negative consequences for rural life (see, for example, Hill, 2008; Scruton, 2006). Despite this there has been very little social science research conducted on this topic. This research helps to fill this knowledge gap. By using empirical data, principally collected in villages in Lincolnshire and from various groups (mainly newcomer residents, long-standing residents and publicans) to explore multiple representations of the village pub this thesis provides an in-depth exploration and interpretation of the values underpinning the research participants' representations and experiences of the village pub. In doing this, the thesis shows that village pubs are seen and experienced as adding value of different kinds – economic, social, and cultural, and that the different groups attach different levels of importance to these kinds of value. It also shows that, whilst the different kinds of value can work in the Bourdieusian interpretation as capital, and be self-expanding and inter-convertible, they can also work to undermine one another. By showing how the village pub is seen through the lens of nostalgia and the rural idyll and that contradictions exist between how the village pub is remembered or imagined and how it 'really' is, this thesis contributes to rural studies literature and, more specifically, to that which engages with the cultural turn as well as to pub literature. The thesis also offers a contribution to practice. It does this first, by imparting knowledge, to different groups, on the types (economic, social and cultural) of diversification that can be used to help sustain village pubs, especially in Lincolnshire; and second, by showing those groups that beliefs and practices around diversification have important consequences for the sustainability of village pubs.

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## List of abbreviations

BBPA	-	British Beer and Pub Association
CAMRA	-	The Campaign for Real Ale
CPRE	-	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CRC	-	Commission for Rural Communities
DEFRA	-	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
NTE	-	Night-time Economy
ODPM	-	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

# Introduction

This thesis seeks to fill an evident gap within social science literature by looking at the subject area of the public house (more commonly known as the pub, and hereafter known as the pub in this thesis) in the rural community. More specifically, it seeks to understand how rural inhabitants and connected actors perceive and experience the village pub. In doing this it argues that the village pub represents a site of economic, social and cultural importance to some rural inhabitants. Consequently, the thesis provides an in-depth exploration and interpretation of the values (outlined above), which underpin the research participant's representations and experiences of the village pub. At this point it is important to mention that the thesis looks at the issue of declining pub numbers from the perspectives of the participants. Thus it does not purport to analyse the impact of PubCos on rural pub numbers but rather seeks to outline and explore how research participants, namely the publican interviewees, saw them. This is also the case in relation to issues including, *inter alia*, supermarket competition, and government legislation.

Social drinking establishments have been a feature of villages for centuries (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). During this time they have become known, amongst members of the general public, for their social capacity as much as a place to purchase refreshments. In spite of this, an extensive review of the literature highlights there is little academic research on the social or cultural milieu of these establishments. The village pub, in particular, has been a much-neglected feature of social science research. This is surprising given that there has been a significant decline in the number of pubs (including village pubs) across the country.

The decline, particularly of village pubs, has caught the eye of the British media (see BBC News Online, 2010b; Leach, 2009). There exist differences of opinion

regarding the causes of the decline. Whilst many media sources (see Daily Mail, 2011; Kingsnorth, 2005; The Sunday Times, 2008; Wilby, 2008) speculate, they generally fail to substantiate their claims with anything except circumstantial evidence or hearsay. A similar scenario occurs in relation to the impact of the decline on villages and their communities. For example, different opinions and views are disseminated throughout the British media (see Hill, 2008; Scruton, 2006), but with little to no evidence to substantiate the cases being put forward. As a consequence, it is difficult to understand why there has been a decline in the number of village pubs, the impact the decline is having, particularly on rural communities, or what can be done to halt the decline.

It was as a consequence of the above that this research took place. Empirical research was used to address the gaps that exist in our current knowledge on the different values (economic, social and cultural) ascribed to the village pub. Data from a series of semi-structured interviews was used to develop an exploratory framework of the relationship between these values and how they impact (individually and collectively) on images and experiences of the village pub.

The thesis is divided into three sections. The first encompasses the literature review, methodology and methods chapter, contextualisation chapter, and the historical chapter. These four chapters ‘set the scene’ and act as the building blocks for the rest of the thesis. The literature review (chapter 1) highlights the significance of terminology, identifies and gives justification for the research topic.

Chapter 2 details the methodological decisions made during the research process. The chapter opens with a brief discussion on how I came to choose grounded theory before going on to look at the influence and impact of my personal characteristics (e.g. lived experience of the rural, gender, age) on the interview process and collected data. Following this it discusses and justifies why the Glaserian approach to grounded theory was adopted. Included within this section is a discussion of what I



understand reflexivity to be and how this is inherent within the chosen approach. The final section of the chapter describes the methods and sampling techniques used for the fieldwork. Included in this section, *inter alia*, are a discussion on the relationship between the researcher and the research topic, a discussion of the grounded theory stages in practice e.g. site and selection of participants, the approach and negotiation of interviews, methods for making notes, the coding process including the reasoning behind chosen categories and sorting process and how these processes resulted in the emergence of the core category of ‘adding value’. This section of the chapter also defines the theory generated by the adopted grounded theory approach before closing with a discussion of the ethical considerations of the research and the decisions taken to ensure no harm could be inflicted upon participants as a result of their responses.

Chapter 3 provides theoretical underpinning for the research by looking at theories of representation. The first half of the chapter reviews some the approaches towards the study of rurality before going on to look at what I interpret to be the most salient influences when researching rurality. Included in this half of the chapter are discussions on the rural idyll, the types of rurality exhibited in the villages featured in this research, and the types of conflict that can arise in rural spaces. The second half of this chapter looks at representations of the pub from the perspective of gender and social class. In doing this it looks at some of the more negative representations as well as experiences of the establishment and provides the wider context needed for my research findings on the village pub.

Chapter 4 provides a bridge between the first (setting the scene) and second (findings) sections of the thesis by discussing the historical context of the pub, its regulation and the regulation of alcohol consumption. It describes how wider political and social changes have impacted on the pub and how the pub has responded to these. In doing this it addresses the decline in the pub’s economic, social and cultural

importance over time; documents the trends in rural pub numbers across the county of Lincolnshire, and specifies, since World War Two, pub number decline in the villages featured in this research.

The second section of the thesis is focussed on the findings of the research and contains four chapters. Each of these chapters makes use of case study examples to add richness to the discussion. Chapter 5 explores and interprets the economic importance ascribed to the village pub by participants. In doing this it describes the decline of traditional village services before going on to examine the reasons for the decline of the village pub. Additionally, it looks at the importance of village services for local economies and examines the impact that the decline of the village pub is having on economies, particularly at the local level. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the methods village publicans, are adopting to aid the economic viability and sustainability of their business.

Chapter 6 explores and interprets the social importance ascribed to the village pub by participants. It examines how the village pub has traditionally fitted into village life and explores how rural inhabitants perceive and experience the social aspect of the establishment. In doing this it examines the village pubs capacity to create, maintain and strengthen personal and community networks before going on to look at how the decline in the number of village pubs is impacting on the social well-being of village residents, communities and villages.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the cultural importance ascribed to the village pub. It outlines the difference between country and village pubs and discusses the history and heritage that is attached to and reproduced by the village pub. It also examines how the decline in number of village pubs has negative implications for local and national identities as well as for village imagery. In addition, it explores the role of the village pub in the rural idyll and outlines how this idyll projects the idea of the ‘traditional’

village pub; how it should aesthetically look, how it should 'fit' into village life and what it should retail. Throughout, the chapter discusses the tensions that exist between the types of rurality on offer within the village pub and the representation of that rurality to the consumer.

Chapter 8 is a bridging chapter between section two (findings) and section three (conclusion) of the thesis. The chapter explores what publicans and communities are doing to try and ensure the sustainability of their local. It examines the advantages and disadvantages of diversification measures such as the placing of another service in the vicinity or grounds of the village pub, co-operative and/or community-led village pubs, bartering and the celebration of local history and heritage. The chapter also outlines what other types of measures and policies, publicans and rural inhabitants believe, could be introduced, before going on to examine the likelihood of these coming into force and the likely effects if they did.

The third section is a single chapter that concludes the thesis. Chapter 9 has two parts. The first is a summary, drawing out the main findings from findings chapters. The second pulls together the main findings of the fieldwork. It outlines how and why the village pub represents a site of economic, social and cultural importance to some rural inhabitants as well why we should and how we can aid the sustainability of village pubs. There is a particular focus on Lincolnshire village pubs. The chapter shows that the power of the village pub lies in its ability to provide consumers with powerful and attractive images of rurality while also satisfying basic human desires (i.e. food, drink, conviviality and entertainment). It also describes how the knowledge imparted in the thesis can be used by various groups e.g. publicans and communities to help them sustain their village pub. The chapter concludes with a discussion of interesting questions for future research that have emerged, over the research process, as related and under-researched sub-topics.

## Chapter 1: Literature review

There were several purposes to the review. Firstly, to identify some of the different descriptions and definitions which exist with regards to ‘sustainability’, ‘community’ and ‘rural’. Secondly, to ascertain what literature exists on the topic of sustaining rural communities and villages. Thirdly, to identify the gaps which exist in present knowledge on the subject matter of village pubs. Fourthly, and as a consequence of the second and third aims, identify a methodology for the proposed research on village pubs. The discussions that exist especially in relation to the definitions are principally there to highlight the complexity that surrounds them. Although there is some discussion of pub specific literature, the majority of this takes place in subsequent chapters. It became clear during the early stages of this review that the pub had not featured heavily on the radar of social science research. As a consequence of this the methodology of grounded theory became a very plausible approach to adopt. This was confirmed during the latter stages of the review when it became clear that studies of village services have typically focussed on their economic significance and/or failed to give those who reside in the villages a ‘voice’ on the social importance of the services. There have been, over the last few years, attempts to change this but there continues to be a significant gap in our knowledge of what village services really mean to those who reside in villages. As grounded theory became a ‘real’ possibility from the outset of the literature review the decision was taken to use, especially indirect, literature and the review as a means to increase theoretical sensitivity and challenge own assumptions (see chapter 2).

A significant amount of literature exists on the subject matter of sustaining communities (see for example, CRC, 2007a; Moseley, 2003; ODPM, 2005). However, different publications describe not only sustainable, but also communities, differently.

The ODPM (2005:56) states that “sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents and are sensitive to their environment... They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run... [They] offer good services for all”. Whilst this description provides a useful starting point, which is enhanced further when the ODPM goes on to list the characteristics of sustainable communities, it is problematic. For instance, it fails to state what it believes a sustainable community to be; thus it offers very little in the way of actually explaining what is meant by the terms ‘sustainable’ and ‘communities’ (see also CRC, 2008a, and CarnegieUK Trust, 2007, for similar failure to define ‘sustainable community’). Moseley (2003) dedicates one chapter to the meaning of sustainability and another to the definition of ‘community’. This serves to highlight that these terms are complex. The notions which are conveyed in Moseley’s (2003) text seem to indicate that sustainability relates to the internal characteristics of a system or way of doing things that ensures that that system or way of life endures. For Moseley (2003) the journey to reach the destination of being sustainable requires the preserving of entities such as ecosystems and public amenities to ensure that former as well as current generations can benefit from them. In this respect the safeguarding of entities through methods such as conservation is an effect of individuals and collectives acting sustainably. Moseley (2003) goes on to discuss why sustainability can only be achieved if entities are examined in relation to one another. This is an important point. For instance, if entities were examined in any other way, then each entity might, through policy implementation, be safeguarded but potentially at the expense of other entities.

Many studies, including Jackson (2009) and Pearce *et al.* (1989) although making use of the term sustainable development do not define it. There are also some studies, especially those which focus on environmental issues, which make use of the

United Nations (2005) definition: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Encompasses, e.g. keeping population densities below the carrying capacity of a region, facilitating the renewal of renewable resources, conserving and establishing priorities for the use of non-renewable resources, and keeping environmental impact below the level required to allow affected systems to recover and continue to evolve” (cited by Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment, 2013). There is nothing wrong with this as at the route of all sustainable development is environmental sustainability, however, it has to be recognised that this is just one strand of sustainable development.

It is in light of the above that throughout this research ‘sustainable’ was taken to mean: *the maintaining of an entity, through the reproduction of various capitals* (adapted from Cheltenham Observatory, 1998, cited in Moseley, 2003:20). At the beginning of the research the meaning of capitals was purposely left open ended. This was to ensure that no theory was ‘forced’ onto the data. As the research progressed, and in line with grounded theory, relevant literature to the emerging theory was introduced, including Bourdieu’s (1986) work on forms of capital. During the stage of selective coding (see chapter 2) this work was drawn upon to help explore and make sense of the various types of value (economic, social and cultural) emerging from the data and the relationships between them. For Bourdieu (1986), following Marx, capital is simply self-expanding value, although it can take different but interdependent forms, such as economic, social and cultural capital, which can all be converted into one another. For example, some individuals (e.g. early career researchers) may convert their cultural capital in the form of accrued academic success, from investments and commitments to education, into economic capital, such as access to secure employment. In this view, cultural capital is not reduced to economic capital, rather it is human relations in capitalist society that become reduced to relations of money and commercial exchange.

In order to explore but not force Bourdieu's (1986) ideas onto my emerging theory, I decided not to accept them *per se* but use them to explore if any distinctions exist between Bourdieu's (1986) use of capital and my use of value as well as if any distinctions exist between Bourdieu's (1986) arguments on the conversion of capitals and my own on the interaction between the identified values – discussed in chapter 9. It was for these reasons that Bourdieu's (1986) definition of capital was chosen.

Many individuals including politicians, journalists and scholars frequently use the term 'community' in public speeches, government publications, newspaper columns and academic papers. In England the term has historically been applied to a group of individuals who interact with one another and see themselves as a group (Poole, 2007). This definition appears to be relatively straightforward but in reality the meaning of community is complex. For instance, it is possible to identify different categories of 'communities' (see Moseley, 2003; Poole, 2007). This research is concerned with 'geographical' communities, where the emphasis is on locality (Bryden *et al.*, 1997; Moseley, 2003; Poole, 2007). However, locality is not the only feature of this type of community. There also has to be, for example, a bond between members (see Mooney and Neal, 2009), whose strength can vary. Accounts of rural living and rural communities, whether they be lived or imagined, often have undertones of kinship and strong social bonds running through them (see BBC Drama, 2013; Buckton, 2005; Porter, 1992; Seymour 1991). Durkheim (1984) recognised that there are different ways in which individuals can be connected. His concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity (see Hillyard, 2007; Somerville, 2011) highlighted that individuals can be connected with or without any kind of interaction taking place (Somerville, 2011). However, the existence of a community does require an element of recognition, both inside and outside the community, of the connection that exists between its members (Somerville, 2011). This research, for example, found that it was not just living in the

same village that made a village community, but also the recognition of what the village was and of what its residents' attachment to it meant. My definition of 'community', therefore, involves not only geographical location but also recognition of the connectedness among those living in the same location: *'a group of people who either reside in or have an attachment to a place, who recognise one another as having the same attachment or shared residence and who are also recognised by others outside their group'*.

The meaning of the term 'rural' is also contested. The way in which people perceive settlements as being rural or not can be through lived experience or through what they imagine to be the case. Each of these perceptions, as shown in chapter 7, can impact on another and influence how people define and describe the rural. According to Francis *et al.* (2001) areas that are sparsely populated and contain a lot of fields, farmland, woods, and dispersed villages, small towns and hamlets, are rural areas. Another way in which the rural has been defined, however, is in terms of the social characteristics of communities (Woods 2005). This type of definition tends to draw on the work of Tönnies. Tönnies (1955) concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* were not 'designed' to classify settlement patterns; instead they were terms to describe distinctions between different social formations (Lee and Newby, 1983). Nonetheless, they have been influential when it comes to defining and describing the rural. In Tönnies (1955) kinship and strong bonds, where individuals engage in social relations for the good of others, are at the core of *Gemeinschaft* ('community'). Intertwined with these rich social relations, *Gemeinschaft*, according to Hillyard (2007), implies a close emotional and economic attachment to one geographical locale. The opposite of *Gemeinschaft* is *Gesellschaft*, where self-interest predominates and social relations are engaged in as a means to achieve own ends, making the relations themselves 'artificial' (see Somerville, 2011). The concept of *Gemeinschaft* is close to that of the rural idyll,



however, and literature that draws on Tönnies (1955) work to define the rural through particular types of social interaction and formation tends to evoke this idyll concealing many of the realities of rural living in which the bonds between residents can be weak rather than strong. This can hold implications for those who ‘buy into’ this image of the rural and who are often left disenchanted when the experience does not live up to the image (see chapter 7).

Some scholars and/or organisations have attempted to define rural in terms of population sizes and densities. For example, in Eire geographical areas with less than 1,500 inhabitants have been categorised as rural settlements (United Nations Demographic Yearbooks, 1955, cited in Robinson, 1990:3). This type of categorisation is problematic for it uses an arbitrary cut-off point, providing an impression that what is rural is precisely measurable; which is not the case. Whilst some sources do not distinguish between different degrees of rural, the former Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) use eight different categories to describe settlement areas (see CRC, 2007d). This is a significant strength because it enables one to see that rural areas are not homogeneous. It is not easy, however, to identify which category an area falls into. For example, one has to know the population of settlements. In the case of wards and/or districts, the characteristics of the population have to be identified before it can be worked out into what category each settlement falls. The work by the CRC (2007d:4-5), in particular the map, was useful for this research, as it allowed the identification of Lincolnshire as a suitable county.

The decision was taken not to use the CRC/DEFRA classification for the main research, because there was no need to specifically look at either sparse or less sparse areas and therefore no need to distinguish between these categories of rural. For the purposes of this research, more specifically data collection, ‘rural’ was taken to mean:

*'small settlements namely villages and hamlets* (adapted from Francis *et al.*, 2001). Despite the fact that definitions and descriptions of sustainable, rural and community differ from one person to another there is some similarity between the texts on sustaining rural communities. For example, the majority of the literature is on geographical communities. What is more, many publications talk about the decline of services (e.g. post offices, village shops, public transport) as well as the lack of affordable housing in rural areas and argue that these matters contribute not only to the erosion of rural communities but also to social exclusion in rural areas (see Blunden and Curry, 1985; CPRE, 2006; Moseley, 2000; Moseley, 2003; Pacione, 1984; Robinson, 1990; Shucksmith, 2012; Shucksmith and Schafft 2012). In addition to this, many publications also discuss the types of policies which could be implemented to sustain villages, their services and communities (see CPRE 2006; CRC, 2007a; CRC, 2008a; Jones and Smith 2000; Kenway and Palmer, 2000).

There are a number of publications which examine the decline of post offices and/or village shops (see CRC, 2006a; CRC 2007b; CRC, 2007c; Kingsnorth, 2008). What is more, it is possible to see a number of recurring themes between different texts. For example, many make the following two points. First, the decline of post offices and village shops is detrimental to many individuals – especially vulnerable groups, such as those of advanced years, who often rely on these facilities not only to collect their pension and everyday grocery items like milk but also to chat to other individuals (CRC, 2007c; Kingsnorth, 2008). Second, the closure of a post office has knock-on implications for other village amenities as well as employment. For instance, if a post office located within a village shop closes then the shop itself may lose some custom and potentially cease trading which in turn will create not only job cuts but will be to the detriment of an area's local economy (see CRC, 2006a:9).

One of the landmark studies on post offices and village shops is by the CRC

(2007c). This study used quantitative methods (principally questionnaires containing closed questions) to examine the importance of rural post offices which are located within village shops. In addition to the points mentioned above, this study found that whilst rural post offices, by and large, are not cost effective they are an iconic institution which is seen by many “as a symbol of the ‘health’ of a local community...” (CRC, 2007c:17). Given the main aim and objectives of this study (one of which was to understand the implications of post office closures, see CRC, 2007c:2) it is surprising that this study only really focussed on the direct economic effects and not on the indirect effects relating to the social and cultural role of the service. Many of the services post offices offer, including purchasing stamps, taxing vehicles and paying utility bills, are not exclusive to them. It is often cheaper, for example, to pay utility bills by direct debit, yet many individuals still choose to pay at the post office. This could be due to financial reasons, such as not having the revenue to cover direct debits, but it could be due to other, non-financial reasons such as the ability to interact and socialise. This social value of the rural post office network was extensively highlighted in a report by Postwatch (2002), which looked at the impact, on rural communities, of rural post office closures. This study explicitly showed that rural post offices contribute to the well-being of those who reside in rural settlements. According to this report village post offices provide residents not only essential services such as the ability to pay bills without leaving the village but also act as one of the hubs of villages and in doing so provide a place where people can meet and chat to one another. As a result of this it can be argued that village post offices help to create, expand and strengthen individual and community networks (CRC, 2007b; CRC, 2007c; Kingsnorth, 2008).

In a high number of cases village post offices are located within village shops (CRC, 2007c). This business model has been an integral feature of many villages for many decades. It could be argued that this model helps to maintain the commercial

viability of both services. For example, post office customers often take advantage of the ability to purchase everyday items such as milk or bread when they frequent the post office (CRC, 2007c). Whilst there has been research conducted in relation to post offices and village shops combined and post offices as a separate entity there has been very little conducted on standalone village shops. This is, to a degree, surprising since village shops have been a key feature of many villages. What is more, they have often developed and diversified to take account of and capitalise on wider social change. Many villages in addition to local grocery stores had a range of other services with shops attached to them including bakers and butchers. Although some villages such as Navenby, Ruskington, and Heckington located in Lincolnshire continue to retain these services, many have not been so fortunate. Throughout England, however, many village grocery stores have seen this as an opportunity to retail a more diverse range of produce thus contributing to their sustainability. Given the development of the village grocery store and the social importance attached to this type of service (CRC, 2007c) it can be argued that the village store as a standalone service is worthy of social science research. This can be seen further by the work of Bensley (2010) which provides a brief snapshot of the village shop in terms of its historical origins and development. This work, mainly through historical fact and photographs, highlights the economic and social importance of the village shop; however it lacks any rich data from village residents or shopkeepers to add substance to the arguments presented.

Transport is an issue which often features in the literature on village life and/or rural communities (see Buckton, 2005; Craig, 2010; CRC, 2008b; CRC, 2008c; Gilg, 1985; Pacione, 1984; Ward *et al.*, 2013). For many decades, industries such as mining, agriculture and fishing were a core feature of rural areas (Buckton, 2005) however, the number of people employed in these industries has declined, consequently many individuals have had to travel further afield for employment. What is more, in recent

years rural areas have seen an influx of individuals who want to reside there but work in urban locations (CRC, 2008b). Some organisations such as the former CRC (2008b) see these social and demographic changes (which are discussed further in chapter 5 of this thesis) as being partly responsible for the decline of village services; particularly village shops. They may well have a valid point. For example, rather than make a separate journey to their local shop individuals can and often do pick up their milk, bread, and newspapers from the garage when they re-fuel their vehicles or from the supermarket when they are in town; as a consequence there may be less demand for local shops.

According to a number of publications, cars are the dominant mode of transport in rural areas (Countryside Agency, 2000; Craig, 2010; CRC, 2008b; Gray, 2004). This is, to a large degree, unsurprising. Public transport in many rural areas could be described as being abysmal. The two main problems are that services run infrequently and when they do run they are often late (Craig, 2010; CRC, 2008b). Even if there were more frequent services, it can be argued that many individuals would still opt for private transport. For example, many older people opt to use private over public transport when there is a high volume of teenagers around because they believe (rightly or wrongly) that they will be intimidated by them (see CRC, 2008b:11). According to much rural literature the car is the preferred method of transport for older village residents (Ahern and Hine 2010; Banister and Bowling, 2004; Shergold and Parkhurst, 2012). Some authors, such as Cloke *et al.* (1997), go further than this and suggest that private car usage in rural areas is essential and that many, particularly older people, are dependent on cars to access services such as shops and healthcare provisions. This is a valid point, however it has to be recognised that some literature argues that there is a difference between reliance and dependence. Although the majority of people living in rural settlements, to a degree rely, on cars to get to and from their destinations not everyone who resides in a village is dependent on them (Gray, 2004). There is a fine line between

these distinctions and it can be argued that the reliability and accessibility of public transport is a determinant of whether someone is dependent on cars. Villages such as Waddington, Bracebridge, Caythorpe and Leadenham are served by regular bus services to the town of Grantham and City of Lincoln seven days a week (Stagecoach, 2013). Although these villages have regular public transport, some residents can still be dependent on their cars. For example, some residents, especially older people, are often physically unable to get to designated bus stops and even if they can they often find them, due to many of them having poor shelter and little to no seating, uncomfortable and inaccessible to their needs (Ward *et al.*, 2013). In contrast to the villages named above some other villages such as South Kyme, South East Lincolnshire, have no bus or train service (Sleaford Standard, 2011). In these types of villages, the majority of residents are faced with little other choice but to use cars when they need to access services which are not located within the village. In these instances residents can be described as being highly dependent on private transport to sustain their basic living needs. Given the above, it can be argued that the extent to which village residents are dependent on cars is dependent on a number of interrelated factors including personal health and the villages public transport links.

When village residents are dependent on private car usage to sustain their basic living needs there can be repercussions for their personal financial and social well-being. For example, the financial costs of running a vehicle can leave some village residents in poverty leading them to have no provisions to engage in social activities (Gray, 2004; Welsh Consumer Council, 2004). Some village residents as a means to try and reduce the financial costs associated with running a car have turned to the internet for some of their basic needs such as shopping and banking. This, however, is not always a viable option. For example, not every village has internet coverage (Consumer Focus, 2009) and not every villager is computer literate. What is more, some village

residents simply do not want to use the internet for shopping and banking and would prefer to visit the high street for these services (Richards, 2009) but due to transport costs are being 'forced' into this model of consumerism. This can have repercussions for the individual especially if activities such as high street shopping form the only part of their social life. For example, internet banking and shopping takes away the human element, customers are not able to engage in 'face to face' conversations with other customers or service assistants thus those who are entrenched in this way of life could go onto experience social isolation and exclusion.

The prevalence of private transport in all rural areas has several knock-on implications. First, if areas are being served with public transport but this service rarely gets used (e.g. because people are choosing to rely on the car over public transport) then it may cease to exist, which in turn would be detrimental to those who do not have access to private transport and depend on public transport. According to the CRC (2008c) individuals who reside in rural areas but do not have a car at their disposal often experience isolation and social exclusion. Second, the dominance of cars is negatively impacting upon the traditional characteristics of rural areas. According to the CPRE (2009) increased traffic and the noise emitted from it is eroding the serenity of rural areas. What is more, as the number of cars in rural areas increases so too does the infrastructure associated with them - e.g. parking areas. This can have serious repercussions. For example, when areas of green are concreted over not only is the scenery destroyed but wildlife habitats are lost (CRC, 2008b). Many publications including Craig, (2010), CRC (2008b) and CRC (2008c) conclude that decreasing car usage, improving public transport and increasing the uptake of public transport would help to create sustainable rural communities. Whilst this may well be the case, attaining these goals is easier said than done. For example, changing travel attitudes and/or behaviours takes both education and time. Thus, even if public transport was

significantly improved (which would take a lot of financial capital) there is no guarantee that enough people would use the service to recuperate the initial costs of improvement. As a consequence, councils and other organisations may be reluctant to expend a large proportion of their capital on public transport which may not be cost effective. On the other hand, if public transport does not improve then the car will almost certainly continue to be the main mode of travel. This issue is complex when it comes to sustainability of rural settlements and communities. For example, car usage may bring problems of environmental sustainability but also enables people to live in remote rural areas thereby assisting the economic and social sustainability of those areas but also excluding those who cannot access cars.

When examining the sustainability of rural communities' literature, a recurring theme is lack of affordable housing. At this present moment in time, it can be argued that a lack of affordable housing, by and large, plays a negative role in sustaining rural communities. According to a number of publications, including CRC (2006b) Francis *et al.* (2001); Kingsnorth, (2008) and Phillips and Williams (1984), rural communities are being damaged by a shortage of affordable housing for local people and high proportions of second as well as holiday homes. Many rural locations do not have enough affordable and/or social housing to accommodate locals (Moseley, 2003). As a consequence many, particularly young, individuals have had no option but to leave the rural areas where they grew up. This has implications not only for the individuals concerned but also for rural communities. According to Francis *et al.* (2001) the social composition of rural areas, especially villages, is being distorted as a result of a lack of affordable housing for local people. This distortion is problematic, because if rural communities become significantly populated by, for example, commuters who spend very little time there, not only do they lose their vibrancy and become dormant but they can be eroded or even cease to exist (see CRC, 2006b and Satsangi *et al.*, 2011).



Although there is a lack of affordable housing it must be recognised that many rural areas have, in the last few years, witnessed a sharp increase in the number of large private sector properties being built (Kingsnorth, 2008). Many affluent city dwellers and the retired are attracted, and want to move, to the countryside because of its scenery and its slower pace of life (see CRC, 2006b; McVeigh, 2009). Many building firms, it can be argued, have recognised this and purposely built large detached houses and bungalows to cater for these social groups. As the demand for properties in rural areas has increased, however, so too have house prices (Moseley, 2003). This in turn has made it even more difficult for locals to remain in rural areas. For instance, many locals and first time home buyers do not earn the amount needed to secure mortgages on properties in rural areas. This has led to many residents in rural areas resenting, amongst other things, the ever increasing number of second and holiday homes (CRC, 2006b). This resentment, it can be argued, may lead to conflict between the permanent residents and the second/holiday home owners and in turn create a 'them' and 'us' scenario. This has repercussions. For instance, it means that rural communities, instead of being cohesive, are becoming increasingly divided.

Providing more affordable and social housing for locals in rural areas by capping rent as well as house prices, building more social housing and discouraging second and/or holiday home ownership by means of taxation are some of the policies mentioned by the CRC (2006b), Francis *et al.* (2001) and Kingsnorth (2008) to create sustainable rural communities. These policies may look attractive but achieving them would, for a number of reasons, be difficult. Firstly, the core goal of many landlords and corporate firms is to make as much profit as they can, consequently it is highly likely they would not only vehemently oppose the idea but also try to find ways around the capping of rents and house prices. What is more, it can be argued, capping prices on its own would not provide locals with affordable housing because there is nothing to

stop or even deter affluent commuters from purchasing the houses. Furthermore, it could even be argued that capped or lower houses prices could make them even more attractive to potential incomers.

When villages become heavily populated with commuters or second home owners there can be issues for local economies and some village residents (see Gallent *et al.*, 2005). For example, a potential knock-on effect of a high commuter/second home population is that there is less demand for local services, like village shops. This could have far reaching implications. If local services close due to being no longer cost effective, certain categories of residents, such as older people, who rely on local amenities/services, would suffer. Secondly, although many individuals say that they are in favour of more affordable and social housing being built in rural areas it can be argued that if it was destroy the areas of green which surround their properties they may oppose it. To illustrate this, many individuals hold NIMBY (Not in my backyard) attitudes and thus while they may agree to the principles of affordable and/or social housing they do not want it built 'in their back yard' so to speak (see CRC, 2006b; Gallent *et al.*, 2005; Moseley, 2003). As a result of these points it can be argued that, at least for the foreseeable future, housing processes (or, more importantly, lack of affordable housing in villages) will continue to play a negative role in creating sustainable rural communities.

Whilst there is an abundance of literature which examines the role of post offices, transport and affordable housing in sustaining rural communities there is little written specifically on village halls and pubs. What is more, with the exception of Muir (2009) what is written on the social milieu of the pub is either old or journalistic in style. This is surprising since Oldenburg (1989) makes use of the English pub, as one example, to demonstrate his theory on third places. This theory argues that a third place is an informal meeting place and embodies characteristics such as: being a 'leveller',

where all customers irrespective of social and economic factors mix and integrate with one another; has a core group of regulars who bring the place to life by facilitating a welcoming and sociable atmosphere and attracting and embracing those who are new to the settlement. Third places also exhibit a playful mood where feelings of tension, agitation and hostility are extremely rare (for full list of characteristics see Oldenburg, 1989).

The English pub, according to Oldenburg (1989), is a classic example of a third place, another being the coffee shop. He argues that these places by virtue of their characteristics have the capacity to bring people together socially, facilitate social mixing and integration in both personal and community networks. Oldenburg's (1989) theory, in particular, the so called characteristics of third places can be subject to criticism. Coffee shops, pubs and social clubs, amongst others, are places where people can meet informally and where a variety of networks can be developed, however, this notion of being a 'leveler' is problematic. Throughout history, to the present day many of the establishments termed third places, including the pub, have not only been witness to group segregation but in some instances seen a failure by already established friendship groups to welcome the 'new' (see Hunt and Satterlee, 1986a). What is more, there is also evidence to show that establishments such as bars and pubs are places where tensions can arise, fights can break out and personal and community networks can be impeded (see Graham *et al.*, 1980 and Homel *et al.*, 1992).

Oldenburg's (1989) work can be described as being tunnel vision, it does not comprehend that third places exhibit characteristics that are the antithesis to the ones specified. Furthermore, he suggests that social integration can be hindered if there is a lack of third places in a settlement area but fails to comprehend that third places and their characteristics could actually hamper the development of personal and community networks (see Igwe, 2008). In addition, he fails to substantiate his claims with any rich

‘on the ground data’ and instead relies on, often, outdated sources. This is problematic. For example, pubs change and evolve (see chapters 4 and 5), and the role performed by the pub may also change thus making it inappropriate to solely rely on data from previous decades to substantiate the claims being made. In spite of these criticisms, the very fact that the pub features in Oldenburg’s (1989) theory and is described as embodying social capital suggests that the establishment *per se* is important and worthy of research.

Pubs have been, for many decades, an iconic feature of many urban and rural areas in England but now they are in decline. In the latter half of 2008 approximately thirty nine pubs per week ceased trading for good (BBPA cited in Muir, 2009). Although there has, over the course of time, been a decline in the number of pubs, this decline has significantly accelerated over the last couple of years. According to the BBPA cited in The Sunday Times (2008), “the rate of closures is 14 times faster than in 2005”. Many newspaper journalists, columnists in publications such as the New Statesman and the occasional academic such as Muir (2009) locate this decline in: the implementation of Government legislation; the economic recession; tax increases; the behaviour of Pub Companies (more commonly known as PubCos) and supermarket competition (see Countryside Agency, 2001; Everitt and Bowler, 1996; Jones *et al.*, 2000; Kingsnorth, 2005; Kingsnorth, 2008; Martin, 2009; The Sunday Times, 2008; Wilby, 2008). Although many have written about why there has been decline in the number of pubs many have not substantiated their arguments with reference to any kind of in-depth research. Furthermore, apart from research conducted by Muir (2009) and the Social Issues Research Centre (SIRC, 2008), there has been little independent and/or social science research conducted on this matter. As a consequence, it can be argued that there exists some uncertainty regarding the causes.

In addition to the ambiguity which surrounds the reasons behind the decline in

the number of pubs in England, there also exists a large degree of uncertainty with regards to the impact that it is having on rural communities and villages. Burgess (n.d.) asserts that the termination of any village service and/or facility including the pub, village hall, post office and/or village shop can be extremely harmful to rural communities and put village life “at serious risk” (cited in Hill, 2008). This belief is echoed in an article by Scruton (2006). Such attitudes/beliefs and/or views are, however, by no means universal. In fact, some individuals such as Hands (n.d.) cited in Hill, (2008) have argued that it is society’s image of villages, not villages *per se*, which is under threat from the decline in the number of amenities such as the post office, shop and pub. This is an interesting point and one which is discussed further within chapter 7.

There are several landmark texts on the pub including Hutt (1973) and Muir (2009). Haydon (1994) and Jennings (2007) also write on this topic charting the historical development of the pub and alcohol consumption. Hutt’s (1973:7) text opens with Hilaire Belloc’s (1943) famous quote: “When you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England”. It is, however, not the decline in the number of pubs in England which forms the main focus of Hutt’s text but the breweries’ pursuit of profit and how this is eroding the spirit and the character of many English pubs. In spite of the fact that this text is 40 years old many of the arguments made are still being made today. To illustrate this, Hutt (1973:71) makes the remark that pubs are struggling to survive because brewery tenants have to buy their supplies from the brewery, meaning they have to pay what the brewery states and are unable to look for a more cost-effective supplier. Forty years on from this publication, the same struggle is taking place the only difference being that instead of breweries it is pub companies which are being perceived as putting pressure on pubs (see Kingsnorth, 2008; Muir, 2009).

Muir's (2009) study made use of questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions to examine the social value of community pubs. There are a number of problems with this study. First, it only examines community pubs which only represent a proportion of pubs in England. Second, when detailing the reasons behind the decline of community pubs this publication draws heavily on pub industry and media derived statistics but does not question them. This is problematic, because statistics can be biased and reflect what a particular agency wants them to reflect. Third, whilst it explores why community pubs are an important institution it fails to explicitly document what the decline in the number of community pubs actually means for communities. This last highlighted weakness is one which can, hopefully, be at least partly addressed in this research.

SIRC (2008) made use of interviews, focus groups and on-line questionnaires to assess the qualities which make the pub appealing to people. In doing this they examined issues such as how often people frequent pubs, with whom they frequent and why they frequent them. There are several shortcomings with this study. First, it does not examine the decline in number of pubs; as a consequence, it does not provide the reader with an understanding of why there has been a decline in number of pubs nor what this means for a variety of individuals including publicans and their customers. Second, although there are a few references to different types of pubs, on the whole, this research discusses the pub in an all-encompassing manner. There are, however, many different types of pub in England, including chain establishments like Wetherspools, food-led establishments like Brewers Fayre and village pubs. Everybody's tastes are different so different types of pub can mean different things to different people. By discussing the pub in an all-encompassing manner the reader is unable to gain comprehensive understanding of matters such as the reasons why certain individuals visit certain pubs and/or whether an individual's preferred type of pub is influenced by

who they are frequenting the pub with.

Although a number of weaknesses exist with both SIRC's (2008) and Muir's (2009) research there are also a number of strengths. First, they serve to explicitly highlight that, whilst the pub has traditionally been a neglected topic, it is worthy of social science research. Second, the data collection methods employed by SIRC (2008) and Muir (2009) are not only effective but also, by and large, appropriate. To illustrate this, one of the key advantages of interviews and focus group discussions is that the researcher is able to probe and explore participants' responses to questions, consequently enabling richer data collection and in turn a greater understanding of the subject matter under investigation (see Bryman, 2012; Davies, 2006; Fielding and Thomas, 2008). At this point it can be argued that Muir (2009) and SIRC (2008) could and should have made more use of interviews and/or focus group discussions rather than surveys to find out individuals attitudes towards pubs. This research makes use of these methods because they enable researchers to find out why individuals hold the beliefs that they do about pubs (Morgan, 2006). This, it can be argued, enhances the richness of studies on pubs for it provides an understanding of not only the level of knowledge individuals have regarding the importance of pubs in contemporary England but also where they acquired that knowledge from (see Cronin, 2008).

To sum up this review, the terms 'sustainability', 'community' and 'rural' are complex. Different individuals and/or organisations have different ideas about the meaning of these terms. As a consequence before any research takes place one must clearly define them. Many of the numerous publications on sustaining rural communities focus their attention on the role of post offices, transport and lack of affordable housing. There is very little, however, with regards to the pub and what is written is, by and large, journalistic in style and/or outdated. Two exceptions to this are SIRC's (2008) study and Muir's (2009) study. These are clearly landmark texts on the

pub, but there is room for more. To illustrate this, both SIRC's (2008) and Muir's (2009) research fail to examine how the pub is perceived and experienced in sustaining communities and neither looks specifically at village pubs. To conclude, pubs have been a feature of England for hundreds of years, but they have traditionally been a neglected topic for social science research. Although this is slowly changing there is, as the shortcomings of both SIRC's (2008) and Muir's (2009) research indicate, still very little knowledge on what pubs and their decline in number means for, in particular, rural communities. It is as a consequence of this that more research needs to be done to better understand the pub in the rural community. This is why this research occurs, and is important.



## Chapter 2: Methodology and methods

This chapter is broken down into three sections. The first relates how and why I chose the methodology of grounded theory, followed by a discussion on the impact of personal characteristics (lived experience of the rural, gender, age) on the research setting. The second section reviews the Glaserian and Straussian versions of grounded theory and outlines why I followed that of Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004). It also discusses where the literature review figures in grounded theory research and how reflexivity is implicit in Glaser's (1978, 1992, 2004) approach. In this discussion of reflexivity I also state my own interpretation of reflexivity. The third section, simply entitled 'methods', details how the research on the village pub followed the adopted version of grounded theory. It details how the research was carried out, how the collected data was analysed and how new theory emerged. It looks at personal decisions (e.g. how field notes were 'recorded', where data collection began, and how access to participants was sought and negotiated) as well as my interpretations of the data. This section also reflects on the implications arising from these personal decisions.

### Methodology choice and personal characteristics

At the beginning of this study, I had an open mind as to which methodology to adopt. So I undertook a search and partial review of the literature to identify what studies had been conducted on the pub and what areas most needed to be researched. This review revealed that the little research that had been conducted was largely old, journalistic in style or related to the historical development of social drinking establishments and the regulation of alcohol consumption. As a result, the methodological approach of grounded theory suggested itself, as it is a particularly appropriate methodology when little is known about a topic. Grounded theory is a

methodology where the focus is on the generation of theory from data rather than on the testing of existing theory (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It opens up a substantive area and leads to the creation of hypotheses, which in turn can lead to further research on the substantive area and the testing of the initial hypotheses (see Glaser, 1992:32).

The remainder of this section aims to look in more depth at the influence of the researcher in terms of, first, choosing the topic area, and second, personal characteristics and knowledge, on the interview process within the research setting and the impact of this on the collected data and the researcher's interpretation of that data.

I came to the topic of village pubs as an area of research as a result of two factors. First, my MA dissertation where I found that despite a growing night-time economy England was witnessing a decline in number and usage of certain types of drinking establishments, namely pubs. Whilst many of the sources used in my dissertation recognised this decline none went on to comprehensively explore the impact of this on local communities. Second, personal experience, as for all my life (29 years) I have resided within a village in the county of Lincolnshire. Throughout these years I have witnessed the closure of many village services including newsagents, butchers and pubs. The latter of these, as a result of increased local media reporting and repeated sporadic closure, has repeatedly caught my eye and led me to question the impact of this on villages and rural inhabitants. It was as a direct result of the factors discussed in this paragraph that I decided to pursue doctoral research on the village pub.

As a result of the above I have lived experience of the rural. By being open and transparent about this I was able to make decisions, such as those discussed in section 3 to minimise the impact of the researcher on the interview context and beyond. Whilst I have lived experience of the rural I have very little direct experience of the village pub. This is not to say that I did not have my own ideas and preconceptions about it. For example, at the beginning of the research influenced by television programmes such as

‘Last of the Summer Wine’ and ‘Midsomer Murders’ I was in receipt of the idea that the village pub was a continual hive of social activity irrespective of the time or the day of the week. By recognising and acknowledging this preconception from the outset I was able to, in line with Glaser’s (1978) grounded theory<sup>1</sup>, distinguish it from other kinds of data. Another factor that had the potential to affect the interview context was the fact that I or my extended family might be known by some of the participants. The majority of my family have resided in different parts of Lincolnshire all their lives and thus are known, at least by name, in many villages throughout the county. This may have affected the level of information given to me as opposed to a researcher who was unknown to the participants. This is discussed further in the methods section of this chapter.

In addition to this I was aware that other personal characteristics, including gender and age, had the potential to influence the interview context. It has been suggested that a researcher’s gender, combined with appropriate gender norms of a given society, can either open or restrict access to research sites, topic areas and questions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Given this and the fact that until recent decades the pub was typically a male dominated establishment it is possible that my gender may, to a degree, have impacted on the outcome of some of the interviews. For example, some male participants may have been ‘selective’ in the stories they relayed to me given the ways in which power relations between the genders have traditionally been played out in the social space of the pub (see Hey, 1986). Age was another factor that had the potential to influence access to participants and the interview context. Given that I am a researcher in my twenties and that many of the participants were significantly older than me there was the potential for rapport to be affected. For example, some participants may have withheld, played down, or embellished

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<sup>1</sup> See section two for a discussion of the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) approach.

information because they felt, that due to my age, I would not be able to understand or relate to their experiences.

### The pub in the rural community -

#### A methodological decision: Glaserian versus Straussian grounded theory

This section of the methodology builds on the first. Whilst I have already acknowledged that I adopted the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) approach to grounded theory this section aims to detail why I choose this particular approach. It will do this by reviewing the literature pertaining to how the two main founders of grounded theory have developed their approaches over the course of time.

In the late 1960s a ground-breaking text by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) was published, which focussed on the development of a theory that was grounded in the collected data. Since then, the two founders have disagreed on the process of creating theory from data. Put simply, Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004) maintains that for grounded theory to be generated the researcher must carry out both substantive and theoretical coding. Under the rubric of the former falls open coding, constant comparison of data and selective coding. Data, once recorded, should be open coded and constantly compared with other data and created memos. The categories that are created by this constant comparison method then aid the gathering of new data. This process is called theoretical sampling. The new data is then coded and constantly compared with already coded data. Open coding continues until a core category is identified. Selective coding which results in the creation of substantive codes follows on from open coding. Here the researcher codes only for categories which relate to the core category. Furthermore, it is the core category which aids further data collection. Once substantive codes have been developed the researcher moves on to theoretical coding. The goal of this type of coding, through the method of constant comparison, is to create

hypotheses regarding the possible relationship between the substantive codes; these hypotheses can then be incorporated into the developing theory (Glaser, 1978:55). In contrast to Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that the researcher should, after open coding, adopt axial coding whereby a ‘coding paradigm’, which guides how researchers should question the data, is used to put the data back together in an original way. There are six elements to Strauss’ (1987) and Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) ‘coding paradigm’ (phenomenon; causal conditions; context; intervening conditions; action/interactional strategies; and consequences) (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998:123-142). This axial coding, however, can be considered highly problematic. For example, it explicitly encourages the researcher to look specifically for certain characteristics, which in turn leads to codes being forced onto the data rather than being allowed to emerge (Glaser, 1992:63). This means that the theory that will be created will only be partially grounded in the data and thus it would be exceedingly inaccurate to describe the ‘finished product’ as grounded theory. Strauss (1987) does make an attempt to justify the use of a ‘coding paradigm’. For example, he argues that it ensures conceptual development and density (Strauss, 1987). It can be argued, however, that Glaser’s approach can also produce conceptual development although in a way that is emergent not forced.

There is no limit to the length of time a grounded theory study can take; it is all dependent on the joint process of data collection, coding, memo writing and constant comparison method. However, as a consequence of the guiding ‘coding paradigm’ and forced coding, Strauss’ (1987) and Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) version is less time-consuming and laborious than Glaser’s (1978, 1992, 2004). This, however, comes at a heavy price, given the criticisms of the ‘coding paradigm’. It was because of this that the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) approach was adopted for the research contained within this thesis.

Conventionally, one of the first stages of social science research is to review the literature that surrounds the topic under investigation. However, with grounded theory research, the issue of when to conduct a literature review is a contentious matter. Glaser (1992) maintains that literature which relates to the research topic should not be reviewed until the researcher has, through coding and the constant comparison method, identified and started to code for the core category. The main reason for the delayed review, according to Glaser (1992), is to ensure that the generating of categories is not hindered by the existing notions contained within the literature on the topic under scrutiny. Glaser's (1992) line of reasoning may well be valid. For instance, it is possible that a researcher could, after reviewing the literature, subconsciously import existing rather than create original categories, which in turn, could result in the eventual theory not being 'grounded' in the data (see Hickey, 1997 in cited McGhee *et al.*, 2007). At this point, it must be acknowledged that Glaser (1992:36) advocates engaging with unrelated literature from the start of a grounded research study. He goes on to argue that reading literature which is not directly related to the subject area can assist a researcher with theoretical sampling and increase theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1992:36). Whilst Glaser (1978, 1992) maintains a sound argument against reviewing the related literature at or near the beginning of a grounded research study, it must be noted that there exists a strong case for conducting a literature review.

There are a number of benefits to reviewing the literature at or near the beginning of a research project. For example, it enables the researcher to identify not only the gaps which exist in current knowledge on the subject area but also the theoretical approaches that have been utilised to research that area (Barron, 2006; McGhee *et al.*, 2007). The yielding of this type of information is of vital importance to a researcher as it can first, offer guidance on the 'best' direction to take the study in terms of originality, and second provide justification for the chosen methodological

approach. In contrast to Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004), Strauss and Corbin (1998) see some value in reviewing the literature that directly relates to the subject area early in a grounded theory study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), examining the existing literature early can, amongst other things, aid with the development of the initial questions for initial data collection. Although Strauss and Corbin (1998) see advantages in reviewing literature early in a grounded theory study they do not entirely dismiss Glaser's (1978, 1992) arguments. For instance, Strauss and Corbin (1998:53) freely acknowledge that creativity can be, to a small extent, hindered by the literature, especially if the researcher allows existing concepts to be imposed onto the data.

The Glaserian approach is very much in line with the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) version of grounded theory; however, Glaser (1978) has expanded on the approach and, in particular, has introduced theoretical coding. For Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004) a good grounded theory on, for instance, the substantive area of the village pub is one where the categories created not only fit the data but are able to explain and forecast what is happening with village pubs. In addition, the theory will have relevance and will be easily adaptable in the light of new data on village pubs. Data collection and data analysis go hand in hand in the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) approach. In layman's terms once the initial data has been collected it should be coded and then compared with other data. This process, by highlighting the issues that need expansion or clarity, should then aid the gathering of new data (Birks and Mills, 2011). A key point to recognise with the Glaserian version of grounded theory is that 'all is data', that is to say anything that the researcher comes across during their time researching the substantive area can serve as data (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2004).

One of the ways a grounded theory researcher can collect initial data, according to Glaser (1978:45), is for them to visit sites and participants who they believe will endow them with fruitful data and data sources. Given this, the author, in order to obtain

data and directions for acquiring further data on village pubs, could start the investigation by going to village pubs, observing as well as speaking to publicans and customers. As soon as the initial data has been recorded coding should begin. The Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) approach first advocates open coding. Here the researcher should scrutinize the data, line by line, and assign codes to all themes/characteristics. Once the data has been open coded it should be constantly compared to other data, memos should be created, and similarities as well as differences noted, eventually leading to the creation of categories. These categories, through the constant comparison method, should then, by highlighting the issues that need expansion or clarity, be used to aid the collection of new data; thus the method of coding and comparing continues (Birks and Mills, 2011). This process of theoretical sampling continues until theoretical saturation occurs, that is when no additional relevant information is being yielded from the data. As theoretical sampling progresses and the researcher is able to confidently identify a core category (that is, a key theme which sums up what is happening in the data (see Glaser, 1978:93-100), open coding should, according to the Glaserian version of grounded theory, make way for selective coding (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2004). When selective coding, the researcher still compares data and employs the process of theoretical sampling, but, in contrast to open coding, the researcher only codes the themes/characteristics which by some means relate to the identified core category. Furthermore, it is the core category, rather than general categories, which now guide the theoretical sampling. The ultimate goal of selective coding is to generate “substantive codes [which] conceptualise the empirical substance of the area of research” (Glaser, 1978:55).

Theoretical coding was not discussed in Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) original formulation of grounded theory; instead it was introduced and featured heavily in Glaser’s (1978) text. With theoretical coding the aim is to generate theoretical codes



which express possible associations between the substantive codes; these relationships can then be turned into potential hypotheses and be incorporated into the emerging theory (Glaser, 1978:55). As with open and substantive codes theoretical codes should not be forced onto the data, but should emerge as a consequence of the continued theoretical sampling and constant comparison method (see Glaser, 1978:72-74). Although one has thus far described the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) version of grounded theory in a fashion whereby the coding stages are broken down into a neat process, it must be acknowledged that in reality the generation of substantive and theoretical codes will occur concurrently. Furthermore, this will be explicitly visible in the memos that the researcher has created.

Memos are one of the most central ingredients in the Glaserian version of grounded theory (see Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2004). Essentially, a researcher should start to write memos from the very first time they open code their data and should continue to write them until the sorting and writing stage and beyond. The memos should capture, amongst other things, the researcher's views on the codes created and the associations that the researcher has made about those codes (Glaser, 1978). Whilst memos can take many different forms (for example, they could be a very brief note or a comprehensive composition) the important thing is that as soon as the researcher has a so-called 'eureka' moment they must without delay make a memo to avoid the thought they have had being lost (see Glaser, 1978:83-92). In the Glaserian version of grounded theory the sorting of memos is given the same level of priority as the writing of memos (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2004). On paper the sorting of memos is a relatively straightforward process. In reality, however, it can be described as being somewhat complex. The sorting process involves, through the constant comparison of memos, the researcher trying to locate the similarities and connections that exist in their created memos. Throughout the comparing of memos 'new' ideas will be formed and additional memos

created. These additional memos are then compared with other memos, and an outline for the theory slowly but surely starts to emerge. As the sorting process progresses and nears completion one starts to witness the formation of a fully integrated theory (see Glaser, 1978:116-128). Whilst the sorting process is clearly laborious it is a necessary and vital stage in the grounded theory approach. For example, it is this stage which transforms the theory into one that is rich and fully incorporated. If the sorting stage is ignored, the theory created will be problematic as it will not fully explain the connections that occur between the categories (ibid). The final stage of Glaser's (1978, 1992, 2004) grounded theory approach is the writing up of the ideas created from the sorting of memos. In essence this stage disseminates the newly created grounded theory to wider audiences.

Grounded theorists differ on the issue of reflexivity. In the context of this research when I talk about reflexivity I draw on my own interpretation of the term, as involving a sense of oneself as a researcher and the relationship between that self and what one is researching. Glaser (1978) does not use the term but it is implicit in his approach. For example, preconceptions are recognised as a particular kind of data to be compared and contrasted with other kinds of data. Glaser's (1978, 1992, 2004) approach also involves 'sensitising', whereby data are coded to allow the researcher to see what is going on, thereby alerting them to key themes relevant to their topic. 'Sensitising' therefore requires the researcher to be reflexive about how data are coded and categorised. This is seen further with 'theorising'. The use and sorting of memos enables the researcher to constantly reflect and, through the comparative process, evaluate data and ideas. Thus 'theorising' involves being reflexive about how the theory is emerging as well as the relationships between codes. Throughout this piece of research, drawing on my own understanding of the term (outlined further in section 3 of this chapter), and adopting the Glaserian version of grounded theory, a reflexive stance

was taken. This was important; it enabled the identification and examination of decisions and biases, aided data analysis and helped to generate a rich integrated theory.

There are a number of criticisms that surround grounded theory methodology. Some are specifically geared towards particular versions whilst others are more general. One of the more common criticisms of grounded theory is that there is no consistency in terminology. There exists some confusion, for example, about the difference between concepts and categories (Bryman, 2012). This is not helped by the fact that Glaser (1978) uses these two words interchangeably, to mean the same thing. This, however, is not always the case. Birks and Mills (2011:173) define a concept as “an idea or notion that encapsulates a descriptive explanation of a phenomenon or characteristic of a phenomenon”. In contrast, they define a category as “a higher level concept that represents a group of codes” (ibid). The confusion that exists with the terminology of grounded theory is problematic. It has the potential to hinder not only how, particularly, first time grounded theorists understand the grounded theory approach but also how readers interpret grounded theory studies. To avoid any confusion in this study the definitions given by Birks and Mills were adopted.

The Glaserian version of grounded theory has both advantages and disadvantages. One of the main advantages is that it allows concepts and categories to emerge; as a consequence, the theory that is generated is truly grounded in the data. On the other hand there are two concurrent disadvantages. First, the process is time consuming. For example, it takes a significant amount of time before any so called ‘theoretical fruit’ is yielded (Bryman, 2012). Second, it requires the researcher to exercise considerable patience, persistence and meticulousness. These two disadvantages can lead to problems, especially if tight research deadlines have to be adhered to. There might, for example, be a temptation to rush coding or skip a stage such as memo sorting. This is problematic because it could force codes onto data or lead

to connections between categories being overlooked. Whilst there are many criticisms of grounded theory (see, for example, Thomas and James, 2005) the majority of these are misplaced. The only serious one, which Charmaz (2006) tries to take on board, is that data are always already constructed to some extent. This highlights even further the importance of Glaser's version as it enables, through the constant comparison method, the researcher to deconstruct data through processes of memoing and coding.

In summary, grounded theory, as the name suggests, is concerned with the development of theory which is grounded in data. Since the original 1967 publication the founding fathers have taken grounded theory in different directions. Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004), by and large, has stayed true to the original idea and emphasises the emergence of categories through the methods of constant comparison and theoretical sampling. Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), on the other hand, advocate the use of a well-defined 'coding paradigm' to put fractured data back together in new ways. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Glaser's (1978, 1992, 2004) version is time-consuming but the end theory is firmly rooted in the data. In contrast, the version of Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) is, as a consequence of the coding paradigm, less time-consuming but results in a theory that is only partially grounded in the data and therefore it would be, to some extent, problematic to describe the end product as grounded theory. It was principally in light of this last point combined with the fact that reflexivity is inherent in the Glaserian approach that the author elected to adopt Glaser's version of grounded theory for research on the pub in the rural community.

## Methods

There is no prescribed data collection method associated with the Glaserian (1978, 1992, 2004) grounded theory approach. It is, therefore, possible to use an array of methods ranging from surveys through to observation. The important aspect to be

remembered is that theories should be allowed to emerge from the data rather than being forced onto the data. Throughout the research I was mindful of this and took reasonable steps, including placing no timescale of how long data collection should take or on how much data should be collected, to minimise the risk of this happening. This sub-section of the methodology aims to detail how the research in this thesis followed the Glaserian approach. It will include discussions on the following areas: the role and use of literature; selected data collection methods and the methods for making notes; chosen sampling techniques; participants and data collection sites (including approaching and negotiating interviews), data analysis (including coding, rationale for codes and categories, the constant comparison method, theoretical saturation, the sorting of memos), and the construction of the thesis. The chapter will also discuss the ethical considerations taken throughout the research process including the decision, in the final thesis, to omit participant names and simply mention the village, which they inhabit.

Although some pub literature was identified and briefly looked at prior to commencement of the research, once the methodology of grounded theory was chosen this literature was put to one side. Furthermore, any other literature relating to the pub that was identified during the early stages of the research process, e.g. Brandwood *et al.* (2004), Haydon (1994), Jennings (2007) and Pratten (2007a, 2007b, 2007c), was filed away until a core category had emerged. Once the core category of ‘adding value’ was identified, pub literature became integrated with additional data collection and was treated as a form of data. During the phase of selective coding the data and categories in the existing literature were constantly compared with one another, my memos and notes to tease out similarities and differences, which could then contribute to theory generation. Although the specific pub literature was put to one side, literature on other village services, e.g. village shops, schools and halls as well on the ‘rural’ and ‘communities’, was continually identified and reviewed throughout the entire research

process. According to Glaser (1992), it is normative and vital that a grounded theorist should only read unrelated literature as a means to stimulate sampling and increase sensitivity of writing styles and ideas. Whilst this was taken into account it was decided to go one stage further and look at the indirectly related subject material. Terms such as 'rural' and 'community' cannot just be used without some knowledge and acknowledgement of the debate which surrounds their definition. It is as a consequence of this subjectivity that the decision was taken to review the indirect literature throughout the entire research process including prior to commencement of data collection. The decision was not taken lightly and there was much deliberation on whether or not it could, as Glaser (1992) advocates, lead to categories being 'forced' onto the data. However, given that I have lived experience of the 'rural' and thus a receipt of preconceived assumptions prior to data collection it was decided that reviewing this area of the literature would lead to 'purer' rather than contaminated coding.

By connecting with the literature from the outset my assumptions could be challenged as the kaleidoscope of knowledge expanded; thus, rather than impeding coding this would ensure further that codes were able to emerge from, rather than be forced onto, the data. Although indirect literature was looked at from the outset, there was no adoption of firm definitions; instead, working definitions which could be adapted depending on the emerging theory were adopted. Furthermore, these definitions were not filtered into data collection; rather, they were there to enhance the researcher's sensitivity, increase reflexivity and limit the biases of the researcher gained through the lived rural experience. In understanding my own reflexivity, I found the work of Atkinson (1990) useful. It highlighted and acted as a reminder that whilst researchers attempt to access what is 'really there' or 'actually happening' what they actually present is a constructed account. This account depends on the researcher's personal

characteristics, research decisions, existing theoretical knowledge and interpretation of the data (Atkinson, 1990). It was important for me to be reflexive throughout the research process so as to ensure that the created theory was integrated and grounded in the different kinds of collected data (i.e. researcher preconceptions, interview responses, existing literature). If I had not been reflexive then there was the possibility that some kinds of data, namely researcher preconceptions, might have been overlooked, resulting in a theory that could, at best, be described as partially grounded.

Grounded theory *per se* is not underpinned by any particular theoretical perspective; rather, a grounded theorist can draw upon any perspective to make sense of an emerging theory (Glaser, 2004, 2005). In line with Glaser's approach and following the emergence of the core category I began to engage with the more directly related literature to help me make sense of some of my findings and provide context to my arguments. As shown throughout this thesis my research draws on rural studies literature, pub specific literature and the work of Bourdieu (1986) (see chapter 9). By drawing on the rural 'cultural turn' perspective in particular, I have been able to understand how and why the rural has come to be perceived and experienced differently by different types of resident. I have thus been able to explore using my findings how and why the village pub 'fits' into these perceptions and experiences and to develop my contribution to knowledge on the valuing of the village pub by rural inhabitants and publicans. This thesis also draws on the work of Goffman (1959), and specifically his ideas around dramaturgy, to aid my understanding and help explain why publicans, despite being aware they may need advice from external sources, are reluctant to seek it (see chapter 8). The work of Goffman (1959) thus does not underpin my contribution to knowledge but it offers support to some of the arguments I make.

At the beginning of data collection, there were no particular preconceptions of how many people would be interviewed or who they might be. The interview method

was chosen because of its ability to attain rich data on perceptions, meanings and experiences of participants (Punch, 2005). Initially it was decided that a semi-structured approach would be adopted with the following three broad areas being introduced to the participant: pubs and village life, alcohol consumption in pubs and policies impacting on pubs and alcohol consumption. Within each of these three areas there was a broad set of sub-topics and questions. This format was intended to function as an aide-memoire for the researcher. The success of a grounded theory study comes from the quality of the data from which the theory emerges. In order to achieve the ‘best’ theory possible the quality of the interviews needed to be high, as measured by the researcher’s ability to travel the participant’s interview path over their own (Birks and Mills, 2011). A more structured interview might have constrained how the conversation progressed, preventing participants from telling the whole of their story. The sub-topics and questions were not set in stone and often changed as the interviews progressed and as codes and categories emerged and evolved. This was anticipated because, in order to remain theoretically sensitive, the researcher has to be attuned to what the participants are saying and what this means for the emerging theory (see Appendix 1 for the first aide-memoire used for face to face data collection with a village publican).

Given that memo writing forms a significant part of grounded theory methodology and was seen by me as an important method to attend to reflexivity it is worthy of some discussion here. It was decided prior to actual data collection that I would carry, at all times, a research scrapbook where notes regarding my thoughts and feelings towards the research along with collected newspaper clippings could be collated. Along with the scrapbook, I decided that after every interview, notes bullet pointing the key themes, as I saw them, would be hand written. As a means to keep organised it was decided that these would be written in a separate notebook from the scrapbook. These hand-written notes were principally made within 30 minutes of the



interview ending and were often written in my vehicle. This was to ensure that the interview was fresh in my head and important points were not 'lost'. Both the scrapbook and these notes were invaluable: not only did they class as data that was useful for the generation of theory but the scrapbook, in particular, acted as written record of my thoughts and feelings towards the research and the emerging theory. Consequently, it helped aid reflexivity and encouraged me to remain alert to the direction of analysis and the influences of my thoughts on this (see Birks and Mills, 2011).

In addition to the scrapbook and the bullet point notes there was also data collected during the interview. It was decided from the outset that none of the interviews would be audio recorded. The decision not to audio record was based on several factors. The first was time. As mentioned above, grounded theory is a notoriously time consuming methodology. It was felt that transcribing interviews would unnecessarily and excessively prolong the fieldwork. Second, and more importantly, as Glaser (1992) advocates, it is categories that are being sought from the data, not precise accounts; as transcription is not needed for contextualisation it would have been, in this instance, a superfluous task. Instead of audio recording interviews it was decided that quotes and notes would be made throughout the interview. Initially these were made on a Dell Inspiron Netbook. This method, however, proved rather cumbersome and despite my ability to touch type I felt that the presence of a rather chunky netbook hindered the interaction between the participants and the researcher as I felt that my attention was being perceived as being on the netbook rather than the participant. This led me to think about other ways in which notes and quotes could be recorded. I still felt that a technological aid was useful during the interview as it enabled me to compile notes and quotes in a quick, readable and thus accurate way. In the end I opted to purchase (July 2010) an Apple iPad and use the 'Notability' app to document my interview notes and

quotes. This proved a rather effective method as it was smaller and thus more discreet than the netbook and I felt that I was able to take notes in a manner which suited my needs without unduly compromising the interaction between the participants and myself. Additionally, it enabled me to organise the collected data in various ways (e.g. by date, participant type) in a password-protected folder. This was not only useful but also a time saving measure as it allowed me to clearly identify information pertaining to the collected data such as whom the interview was with, the date of the interview and the progression of data collection in terms of the type of participant. Whilst all interview responses were held in a secure folder on the iPad they were, for the purposes of coding, printed out. At the beginning of the research, the use of the computerised software package Nvivo to aid coding was considered but rejected, primarily because it only allows small sections of the data to be seen at any one time (Russell and Gregory, 1993, in McLafferty and Farley, 2006). This is in contrast to coding by hand, where several pages of data can be spread out, and categories can be highlighted in different colours, making similarities and differences easy to see, thus making the contextualisation of data easier.

The decisions of where data should be collected from geographically and from whom were decisions that initially needed to be taken by the researcher. In terms of geographical location I chose to collect data from the county of Lincolnshire. This was chosen for two reasons. First, it is a rural county; and second, it was accessible to me. In terms of who I was going to interview there were a variety of avenues I could have taken. As I was researching how rural inhabitants see and use the village pub I could have, for example, started with village residents or publicans. I choose, however, to begin data collection with the Campaign for Real Ale organisation (CAMRA). CAMRA routinely runs campaigns and provides information on how pubs, including rural, can be saved (see CAMRA, 2014). This explicitly gives the impression that the village pub is

important and worthy of resources. I wanted to explore how and why CAMRA continue to come to this conclusion. To gain access to a CAMRA representative I engaged in an email exchange with the organisation, this was initiated by myself on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 when I sent an email detailing my research and asked if I could conduct an interview with a representative. The response by CAMRA's Research and Information Manager was wholly positive and documented that the organisation would be happy to be interviewed as part of my research. Consequently the first interview took place with a representative from CAMRA on 8th February 2010 at 11am. This was conducted over the telephone because this was more practical and involved less stress for the CAMRA representative.

The decision to begin data collection with CAMRA and my interpretation of that initial data did affect the direction of theoretical sampling and subsequent analysis. In line with grounded theory, analysis of interview data governed what data needed to be collected next and where that data could be found. This process (known as theoretical sampling) continued until the point of theoretical saturation was reached. The common themes to emerge from the first interview with CAMRA included pubs as meeting places, places of employment and commercial transactions, places of leisure, places of history and places that are over-dramatised in fictional drama and literature. As the emerging theory required me to explore these ideas further I began to memo about where the next sets of data might come from. This led me to sample those who were involved with the pub either as staff or as customers and villagers who view the village pub as important, to explore how and why they view and/or experience the village pub as they do. On reflection if I had begun data collection with a different type of participant then the process of theoretical sampling could have led me down a different path to the one I took. By being aware of this I am able to alert the reader as to the context in which my theory emerged, thus 'opening up' the gate for future research on

the village pub whereby my theory can be examined, with hypotheses being formed and tested.

Following the identification of the next set of participants needed for the research, after analysis of the CAMRA interview, I had to decide how I was going to gain access to the participants as well as approach and negotiate the interviews. Since theoretical sampling had guided me towards those who are involved in the village pub it became reasonable to make use of publicans as participants. In order to gain access to this type of participant I sent out, aided by business directories, postal invitations to a variety of village pubs across Lincolnshire. These all included a letter, response form and a self-addressed envelope – see Appendix 2 for the copy of the letter that was sent out. Out of the 24 postal invitations sent out I received approximately 6 responses back by post and a further 1 contacted me via telephone. These responses came back intermittently over the course of 9 months starting from the period of postal. The majority of responses were positive with only one declining. As I was consciously aware, from the beginning, that there may be a low response rate I decided to also use personal networks to contact a former publican of the Nags Head, Helpringham. This resulted in the second interview. This interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, and was very fruitful in terms of the data. As the former publican and the researcher were known to each other, at least by name, access was easier and I felt more relaxed about the interview process. For me this interview acted as an ‘ice breaker’ and gave me the self-confidence to approach and negotiate future interviews. Whilst there were advantages to making use of personal networks to identify and gain access to participants it must be acknowledged that this may have raised some issues in relation to the data collected and my interpretation of that data. For example, the participant, due to the fact the researcher knew them, may have consciously withheld more information or embellished the reality more, than someone who was unknown to me, as a means to

avoid embarrassing themselves or others known to both parties. By being aware of this I was able to memo about it and incorporate it into the comparative process.

Throughout the months spent in the field I had to access, negotiate and approach a number of participants and interviews. In addition to making use of personal networks and in the case of publican's postal invitations I also made spontaneous visits to village pubs and/or left leaflets in key village services such as the local shop and pub as a means to 'advertise' my research. Both of these methods were effective in gaining access to participants. For example, following the leaving of leaflets, (see Appendix 3), in village services I had people contacting me via my work number and email address expressing an interest to take part in the research. Likewise, on a couple of occasions, when I entered pubs some of the customers naturally struck up a conversation with me at the bar and when I started mentioning my research they volunteered to take part. In the instances whereby participants contacted me to express their interest in taking part I took their details and we mutually decided on a place and time to conduct the interview. In most instances this was either in their local pub or coffee shop. Some of those who contacted me did not participate, either because they no longer wanted to be part of the project or because theoretical saturation had been reached. In the latter instance, I made a courtesy call to 5 of the remaining potential participants and explained the situation. All of them thanked me for letting them know the situation and offered their assistance should I ever need more data.

All interviews were approached in a semi-formal way; I wore smart but casual clothes so to make the participants feel at ease. At the beginning of each interview I would introduce the project and myself. I would give the participants a copy of the project leaflet (Appendix 3) and ask them if they still wanted to participate. When making visits to village pubs I did not impose myself on any customer. Rather, with the publican's permission, I put a leaflet on the tables and waited to see if any customers

would strike up a conversation with me. I would often enjoy a soft drink whilst conducting the interviews and after the interviews would, on some occasions, play a quick game of darts or pool with participants as a way to express my gratitude for being interviewed. There are some disadvantages to gaining data in the ways outlined above, which can have an impact on the nature of the data collected, and the researcher's interpretation of it. For example, those who do not visit the sites where leaflets were left or do not inhabit pubs can become overlooked by the research and this can have consequences for the developing theory. To some degree this was compensated for in this research first by my written memos where this point is acknowledged and second in the form of snowball sampling. Although theoretical sampling always guided what and where the next data would come from, when additional data from the same type of source, for example village publicans, was needed, snowball sampling became a useful method. It enabled an 'opening' of the gate to some of the harder to reach participants. One case in point was being able to interview former publicans as a direct result of being in contact with current publicans. Another example was being able to interview those who had suffered social isolation by the closure of their local as a direct result of being in contact with their previous drinking friends who had migrated to another pub after theirs closed. In principle, snowball and theoretical sampling are compatible but in practice there is the possibility of conflict. It was because of this that snowball sampling did not form a substantial element of data collection and was only used on an *ad hoc* basis when it was deemed useful for theory emergence.

As has already been outlined, this research was exploratory in nature. Its aim, therefore, was not to claim representativeness but to develop a theory on the neglected subject area of the village pub, which could then, in future research, be tested, 'opening up' the field of research on the village pub in the discipline of social science and beyond. Consequently, the findings discussed in forthcoming chapters do not claim

universality. During the course of this research 64 interviews were conducted with different participants (2 of these were joint interviews) and 2 follow-up interviews. Therefore there were a total of 66 participants. Of these 29 (44%) were female and 37 (56%) were male. Given that the aim of the research was exploration rather than generalisation it was not deemed necessary to aim for a balanced gender sample. On reflection it is not surprising that the sample comprised more males than females since men have traditionally frequented pubs more than women (Jennings, 2007; Muir, 2009). In terms of age the youngest participant was under 20 and the oldest was over 90. Figure 1 below shows a breakdown of the participants by age bands. On the subject of age, it is important to note that Lincolnshire has been witness to an in-migration of older people (especially the coastal areas) and an out-migration of younger people; however, it has tended to have stable population in the age banding 20-64. In 2007, for example, this group formed 57% of the population, an increase of 1% since 1981 (Lincolnshire Research Observatory, 2009:10). Given that the majority of interviews for this research took place in villages away from the coastal areas and were with participants aged between 20 and 60 (73%) it can be concluded that the sample, in terms of age, reflects the wider population structure of the county.

**Figure 1 – Age Banding of Participants**

<u>Age Band</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
0-20	1
21-40	17
41-60	30
61-80	15
81-100	3

Out of the 66 interviewees 46 were village residents, 6 were local business owners (also village residents but not counted in the 46), 12 were former or current

publicans, one was a CAMRA representative, and one was a representative from a local brewery. Figure 2 below shows a breakdown of how village residents classed their own usage of village pubs in terms of frequency, the type of ownership the publicans were linked to and the type of business the other service providers were engaged with. The interviewees were from a variety of Lincolnshire villages (25 in all). The majority of these villages (17) were in the local authority area of North Kesteven and the remaining 8 villages were spread across 4 other local authorities in the county: South Kesteven (3), East Lindsey (1), West Lindsey (1) and South Holland (3). Accessibility, convenience and data analysis, principally, guided which villages data would be collected from. Figure 3 below lists the villages featured in this research and the number of participants from each village. Whilst any village could have been chosen it was decided that Helpringham, due to convenience, would be the first and thus would form a pilot study for data collection. This pilot proved useful in a number of ways. First, it confirmed that village residents were willing to talk to me and be involved with the research. Second, a follow-up interview with interview participant number 2 (see Appendix 4) highlighted, to me, that the aide-memoire being used in the interviews was too specific and thus had the potential to influence the direction of the interview. Following this interview and subsequent coding, the aide-memoire was reconsidered. Consequently, sub-topics were opened up and examples removed, which I (with the hindsight of the first few interviews) felt could influence participant responses (see Appendix 5 for the re-worked aide-memoire). Although, as already mentioned, the guide did change throughout the research process, the most substantial changes took place at this point. This revised aide-memoire was used from interview 5 onwards. Unlike the previous interviews there was a natural flow to the interview, in the direction of the participant, thus increasing the quality of the data and the overall emerging theory. Following interview 5 it was decided that data collection should extend beyond the village of Helpringham. This



occurred as a result of the collected data and my interpretation of it, which led data collection back to publicans and thus encouraged me to open out my research to other villages.

**Figure 2: Participant Breakdown**

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Number</u>
<u>Village residents' self-identified use of pubs (excluding local service providers who are also village residents)</u>	
At least once a week	8
Less than once a week but at least twice a month	9
Occasional users	16
Former regulars who now no longer use the village pub	7
Those who identify themselves as never using the pub	6
Total residents	46
<u>Publicans</u>	
Free House	4
PubCo leased	6
Brewery leased (This participant has been a tenant of both a brewery and PubCo owned pub)	1
Additional interview with PubCo tenant, April, 2013 (known in this thesis as publican anonymous, 2013; not recorded on Figure 3 to provide anonymity)	1
Total local publicans	12
<u>Local businesses (all participants specified under this heading are also village residents)</u>	
Former post office sub master, also owner of a local grocery store	1
Local store owner	1
Former garage owner (if quoted preferred to be known as village resident)	1
Blacksmith (if quoted known as village resident see pp.62 for reasoning)	1

Microbrewer (if quoted wanted to be known as village resident)	2
Total local businesses	6
CAMRA representative (not recorded on Figure 3)	1
Member of the senior management team from a Local Brewery (not recorded on Figure 3)	1
Overall Interview Total	<b>66</b>

### **Figure 3: Villages**

The numbers in brackets indicate how many participants from each village were current or former publicans of their village or another village pub.

<u>Village</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Bardney	1
Bicker	1
Billingborough	3
Billinghay	3
Burton Pedwardine	1
Donington	1
Folkingham	1
Great Hale	5 (1)
Heckington	5 (2)
Helpringham	9 (3)
Horbling	1 (1)
Keal Cotes	1 (1)
Kirby La Thorpe	1
Leasingham	2
Little Hale	1
Metheringham	1
Navenby	5 (1)
North Kyme	4 (1)
Quadring	2
Ruskington	4
South Kyme	3(1)
Swaton	4
Thorpe Latimer	1

Waddington	1
Wellingore	2
	Total 63

With the exception of the CAMRA representative all interviews were conducted face-to-face, as this enabled me to notice the participants' body language, which turned out to be very important for the research and the developing theory. The emotional reactions of some participants when talking about their experiences of village pubs were very powerful and reinforced further the story they were telling. In some instances the passion and emotion displayed was so powerful that I felt transported to the place and time when the events being narrated were taking place.

The data was not collected one group of participants at a time, or one village at a time. Rather the emerging concepts guided which type of participant would be the next. For example, a concept to emerge from the constant comparisons of village resident data was the perception that village pubs help sustain other local services by sourcing their produce locally. To explore this idea further, it became clear that I needed to speak to publicans as a means to see if they did or did not source their produce locally and the reasons for their decisions. This process of theoretical sampling led to a back and forth motion between publicans and village residents, thus opening up the number of villages featured in the research. On occasions theoretical sampling did lead to other groups, such as other local service providers, but these often led data collection straight back to either village residents or publicans. The interviews were conducted in a variety of places ranging from the participant's local village pub through to business premises and coffee shops. Appendix 4 details the order in which the interviews took place in terms of village and type of participant as well as showing where each interview took place. It also outlines the date of each interview, the gender of the participant and the type of resident they identified themselves as being. Most interviews lasted approximately 60-

70 minutes but there were some exceptions. For example, one interview was as short as 15 minutes whilst another was over 2 hours.

The notes and quotes made during the interviews were open coded and repeatedly compared with other data – and, wherever possible, on the same day. This joint process of data collection, coding, memo writing and constant comparison continued until a theory emerged. Initially, the coding took the form of line by line coding, then paragraph by paragraph coding. Codes that were used during the open coding of the first interview, such as ‘pubs as a source of cash generation’, and ‘pubs as a place to visit’ were chosen because they summarised what I interpreted to be the key points that the participant was making. Once the second interview had been conducted and open coded, I was in a position to start constant comparison. At this point I decided I would use coloured pens to highlight any key similarities or differences between the interviews. Thus, when a concept was emerging repeatedly, e.g. ‘pubs provide a source of employment’ it was ascribed, by me, a coloured bullet point. If any differences were seen between the interviews in relation to a repeatedly emerging concept they were marked in the same colour but with a cross rather than bullet point. Thus, for example, if a participant perceived pubs as not being a source of employment it was marked with a red cross rather than red bullet point. To keep track of which concepts were ascribed what colour, I decided that as soon as a concept was identified as repeatedly emerging it would be written in a memo notebook with a coloured bullet point next to it. The decision to use this coloured pen method was that it allowed me a quick and accurate way to see what was happening in the collected data.

During the phase of open coding I was coding the data for concepts and categories. Examples of the concepts that emerged through the constant comparison of data, more specifically the codes I ascribed to the data, are seen in Table 1. The reasoning for these concepts is that that they recapitulate the main ideas to emerge from

participants. Table 1 also shows the emerged categories. These emerged as a result of the emerged concepts being constantly compared to one another. The reasoning for these categories is that they summarise what I interpreted groups of concepts to show. Throughout this process I was continually writing memos on the theory emergence process and comparing them to one another. These written memos were a paper trail of my thoughts towards the developing analysis and connections between the concepts and emerging categories.

After 52 interviews and 12 months of open coding and constant comparison a core category of ‘adding value’ emerged. This emerged as a result of the constant comparison of emerged categories. Thus the core category summarises most of the emerged categories, including: pubs offer benefits to individuals; and pubs provide a focal point in villages. Table 1 below provides examples of the concepts developed during this phase of coding, the emerged categories that came to represent groups of codes, and the emerged core category.

**Table 1: Concepts, categories and the core category**

<u>Codes</u>	<u>Concepts</u>	<u>Emerged categories</u>	<u>Emerged core category</u>
A place to develop transferable skills  A place for locals to earn money  Source of cash generation  Place of economic interaction	Pubs are a source of employment  The loss of pub seen as damaging to other local businesses that trade with the pub  Pubs seen as helping to sustain other local businesses through commercial transactions	Pubs have economic benefits attached to them	Adding value

<p>A place to visit</p> <p>A place to interact</p> <p>Main village feature</p> <p>A place of local memories</p>	<p>Pubs seen as an iconic village feature</p> <p>Pubs seen as promoting community engagement</p> <p>Pubs seen as a place of history and heritage</p>	<p>Pubs provide a focal point in villages</p>	
<p>Personal networking</p> <p>Employment</p> <p>Rest from work</p> <p>Place to share memories</p>	<p>Pubs seen as promoting social inclusion</p> <p>Pubs seen as enhancing community networking and community well-being</p> <p>Pubs are promoting individual well-being through being a place where networks can be created, strengthened and maintained</p> <p>Pubs seen as promoting and disseminating individual histories and individual memories</p> <p>Pubs seen as providing social and economic stability to local residents</p>	<p>Pubs offer benefits to individuals</p>	
<p>Traditional</p> <p>Village identity</p> <p>Imagined experience of the village pub</p> <p>Imagined experience of the rural</p>	<p>Traditional pub means food, fireplace, last orders bell, embodies community togetherness</p> <p>Pub experience did not match imagined experienced</p> <p>No pub means a village in decline</p>	<p>Media derived perceptions of the pub, and rural living</p>	

Lived experience of the village pub	Pub experience viewed through the lens of nostalgia	Nostalgic perceptions of the pub, and rural living	
Lived experience of the rural	Pubs offer different types of rurality		

On reflection the ideas I was developing during the phase of open coding were similar to those within pub specific literature. However, because I did not engage with the pub specific literature until it became explicitly relevant to the developing analysis I was able to avoid ‘forcing’ the themes in the pub literature onto the data. The importance of this decision was highlighted to me as the process of open coding continued and a number of unanticipated connections between concepts emerged. An example of this was when a connection between pub signage and village perceptions emerged. Throughout the whole period of analysis, to avoid ‘favourite’ codes being forced onto the data I discussed data collection and coding with my supervisory team at least once a fortnight. This enabled me to engage in critical discussions about emerging categories and the developing analysis, and thus was important for increasing reflexivity.

Following the identification of ‘adding value’ as the core category, further coding took place. This occurred to explore and make further sense of the emerged core category. To do this all collected data was re-read and relevant data to the core category was identified and extracted. This extracted data was then re-printed, re-coded and subjected to constant comparison. It was at this point that appropriate literature to the developing analysis was introduced and subjected to constant comparison. Memos were also re-coded and constantly compared. In contrast to the open coding, only data and memos that related to the core category were coded. During this phase the constant comparison of data followed the same practice employed during open coding. Thus, once again coloured pens were used to highlight any similarities or differences between

the interviews. The concepts that were developed during this phase of coding, overall, mirrored the concepts outlined in Table 1. There were, however, some additional concepts developed such as ‘village pubs seen as a place of belonging for rural residents’ and ‘a pub’s history and heritage seen to stimulate and enhance personal and community social well-being’. The various concepts were developed because they summarised what I interpreted to be the key points that the participant was making in relation to the emerged core category. During this phase of coding three main categories (economic, social, cultural) emerged as a result of the constant comparison of emerged concepts. These categories emerged as I started to categorise concepts pertaining to the core category. In other words I was starting to look for categories that summed up the concepts developed during this phase of coding. In essence, therefore, the three categories of economic, social and cultural summarise the types of value conflated by participants during the interviews. As categories were emerging during selective coding, so too were theoretical codes, which detailed the possible relationships among the emerged categories. The two main theoretical codes to emerge were that the three types of identified value can work together to facilitate one another and that they can work together to undermine one another. The logic for these codes was that they summarised what I interpreted the participants to be saying in relation to sustaining village pubs. These emerging theoretical codes eventually became captured by the theoretical code: *effects on the village pub of the interaction between economic, social and cultural value*. The reasoning behind this is that it summarised the emerging theoretical codes. For example, I interpreted the emerging theoretical codes as suggesting that the three types of identified value are interdependent and that the different ways in which they interact can affect how the village pub is perceived, how it is experienced and its sustainability.



This process of selective coding led to further data being collected and the reviewing of pub specific literature. During this stage a further 11 interviews took place, all with village residents. These interviews took place because I felt additional data was needed to develop the analysis pertaining to the core category. There was also an additional interview with a senior management team member from a local brewery. This took place post theoretical saturation. Its purpose was to clarify and provide context to some of my memos pertaining to changing landlords and village pub sustainability. To gain access to this participant I engaged in an email exchange with a local brewery, whose response to me asking if I could conduct an interview with a representative was wholly positive. In total, 12 further interviews were conducted to aid the theory generation process. At the point of initiating these additional interviews I felt theoretical saturation had not been reached and thus additional data was needed. The re-coding of the original 52 interviews led me to village residents to explore further the emerged code of consumed rurality. This code emerged whilst I was coding data pertaining to the ways in which people consume goods and services offered by and in the rural. To explore further the connection between this and the core category I felt I needed more data and thus continued with data collection. In contrast to the previous 52 interviews these additional interviews were only subjected to selective coding. Since the core category had emerged there was no need for them to be open coded.

As with open coding, selective and theoretical coding was time-consuming. This was compounded by the fact that all data analysis was done by hand. This was a monotonous process, but it allowed me to be fully immersed in the data, thus increasing theoretical sensitivity and enhancing coding creativity. After a further 11 months, it was clear that no additional categories relating to the core category were being yielded. It was, therefore, decided that theoretical saturation had been reached. On reflection, it is possible to say that theoretical saturation had been reached before this point. For

example, looking back it is clear to see that in reality little to no additional relevant data was being yielded after interview 5 of the additional interviews. Consequently, data collection could have stopped at the interview total of 57. The reason it did not stop there was my excessive caution. There is always a danger of collecting too much or too little data with grounded theory. Although theoretical saturation had been reached two brief additional interviews did take place following the 2013 Budget. One was a follow up interview with a village resident; the other was an interview with a village publican. These very brief interviews (both around 10 minutes in length) took place to enable me to see the types of reaction being made towards some of the Exchequer's decisions such as, the 'penny a pint' tax reduction. I wanted to see what effect they thought this would have on the number of village pubs.

The sorting of memos and extracted quotes followed selective and theoretical coding. As with open coding this was a laborious task, but therapeutic and very rewarding. During this stage, in the form of an A2 book, I sorted my colour coded extracted selective coded notes and quotes. On each page of the book I put the name of one of the villages featured in the research, following this I glued the extracted data to the relevant village page and put the name of the participant next to it. By doing this I was able to explicitly see who gave what data and which value it related to. This in turn helped inform my decisions on how to construct my thesis (see below). The sorting of data, as in any grounded theory study, was a vital one. If this stage had been skipped then the thesis might have been constructed in a way which did not fully explain the connections between the developed categories

By sorting my memos and extracted quotes using the method outlined above I was able to interpret that the three types of value identified (economic, social and cultural) needed to have their own chapters in order to demonstrate not only their relevance to the integrated theory (chapter 9) but also the multifaceted value that is

attached to the village pub. Preceding these three chapters there needed to be two contextualisation chapters: one that looked at representations of the rural and, representations of the pub from the perspectives of gender and class; and another that set out the historical context of the village pub, the factors that have shaped its development and the decline in its economic, social and cultural importance over time. And following them there needed to be a chapter that set out ways in which the values discussed could be maintained or extended. These additional chapters help to contextualise the connections between the categories in the three main analysis chapters and in doing so pave the way for the fully integrated theory to be disseminated in chapter 9.

The theory that has been generated by my grounded theory analysis contributes to the theoretical literature discussed in the theories of representations chapter – chapter 3. It does not purport to carry the same weight as some of the established and ‘tested’ theories discussed in chapter 3; rather it aims to bring the examined subject matter into the social science sphere and provide a foundation upon which additional research on the village pub can be carried out. This is why theories that are generated by grounded theory analysis are important. They are often the ‘building bricks’ for the development and refinement of future theories. During the write up of the analysis chapters, decisions needed to be taken regarding participant names, occupations and the village in which they reside. Although the majority of participants had no objections to being identified in the final thesis, it was decided that names should be omitted. This was to ensure that participants could not be identified, and thus potentially ridiculed or excluded as a result of the responses they gave.

For the same reason, the type of service associated with the local service providers (excluding publicans, discussed in the next paragraph) would also be omitted and would simply state local service provider. Wherever a local service provider stated

a preference to be cited as ‘village resident’ this was respected. In both instances it was decided the village of residency of either the participant or the service should be disclosed. As all the villages where the interviewees reside have populations of over one hundred and the villages where the local service providers work have, with the exception of one village, numerous local services attached to them, the probability of individual participants from either of these groups being identified was extremely low. In the case of the village with only a couple of services it was decided that all quotes from this participant would be labelled as village resident to ensure the participant could not be identified. It was also felt that by providing the village name a level of respect was being shown to the village and the participants, and gave the quotes a higher level of kudos.

As regards publicans, whilst a few were current at the time of the interview, by the time a theory had emerged none were still in that position. Consequently, it was decided to describe all publican interviewees (with the exception of the additional interview, April 2013 – see Figure 2) as former publicans and name the village where their pub was. All the pubs featured in the thesis have had numerous publicans so it would be extremely unlikely that data could be linked to the specific publican. During the research process both the University of Lincoln’s and the Social Research Association ethical guidelines were adhered to. Furthermore, participants were required to sign a consent form to say that they agreed to voluntarily take part in the research (see Appendix 6).

### Chapter 3: Theoretical Contextualisation: Representations of the rural and representations of the pub

The first half of this chapter will focus on representations pertaining to the rural, in order to review some approaches towards the study of rurality. This will be followed by a discussion, drawing on the work of Halfacree (2007), of what I interpret to be the most salient influences when researching rurality. Additionally, the chapter will explore the type of rurality that most closely aligns with the villages featured in this research. In doing this, it will include discussions on the rural idyll and on the types of conflict that arise in rural spaces. The chapter will then move on to look at representations of the pub. It will focus on issues of gender and social class, showing why consideration needs to be given to negative representations and experiences of the pub.

Over the course of time there have been different types of rural social formation, and different ‘turns’ in rural research. On the former, we have moved from a post war ‘productivist’ regime, where agricultural production was at the core of many rural spaces to a variety of ‘post-productivist’ formations (see, for example, Halfacree, 2007). With regards to rural research, it is possible to see three ‘waves’ (material rurality, the ‘social turn’ and the ‘cultural turn’); although it must be noted that these have not occurred entirely separately from one another. Furthermore, one has not superseded another. In other words, whilst there has been a recent shift towards the cultural interpretation there has also remained a commitment by some to understand rurality in terms of its materiality or sociality.

Historically, it was material rurality that was the focus of many early studies on the productivist rural. In his work on ‘Ashworthy’, for example, Williams (1963) linked rurality with locations dominated by an economy based on agriculture. Furthermore, he looked at demographic change and its impact on the social relations of the area, which

he associated with strong bonds of family and kinship (Hillyard, 2007). Williams (1963) was not unique in placing high emphasis on geographical locality as determining and defining how inhabitants live. In her work on Banbury, Stacey (1960) aimed to show how the composition of communities was bound up with geographical location. A problem with these types of studies, in trying to understand rurality today, is that they are time-specific. For example, agricultural economies are much less prevalent in England now than they were when Williams conducted his 1963 study (Hillyard, 2007).

In contrast to studies such as Williams (1963) and Stacey (1960) the second 'wave' of studies developed towards understanding rurality focused on sociality. The 'social turn' can be seen in the works of, for example, Elias and Scotson (1965), Pahl (1968), and Newby (1977, 1985). Elias and Scotson (1965), it can be argued, were amongst the first to engage with the 'social turn' in relation to understanding rurality. For example, in their work on *'The Established and the Outsiders'*, Elias and Scotson (1965) looked at the different social groups inhabiting the village of 'Winston Parva' and showed how social interaction and gossip were being used by an established working class group to stigmatise a group of recent working class newcomers (the outsiders). The works of Pahl (1968) and Newby (1977; 1985) were also sociologically informed. Pahl's (1968) work, for example, looked at rural life through the theoretical lens of social class relations and argued that these are more important than a particular geographical location in influencing lifestyles (Phillips and Williams, 1984). Pahl (1968) was not anti-geography but he was critical of the rural-urban continuum present in material rurality studies (e.g. Frankenburg, 1966) arguing that it lacked explanatory power and thus hindered rather than helped us to understand rurality and rural living (Phillips and Williams, 1984). With regards to Newby he has been concerned with studying social relations and the social change taking place in English villages. In his work, (1977, 1985) Newby highlighted, over time, the social divisions present in

villages and showed the more negative realities, for some, of rural living (e.g. poverty, exclusion). Consequently, his work has provided an antidote to idyllic representations of the rural.

When reviewing earlier studies of the rural it is possible to argue that many have evident omissions. For example, Williams' (1963) study outlined and described the social changes taking place in 'Ashworthy' such as rising class divisions but failed to explore and address how and why these were taking place (Bell and Newby, 1971 cited in Hillyard, 2007). Consequently, it can be argued that his study lacked explanation (ibid). Newby's (1977, 1985) work can also be criticised in the sense that it neglects some important groups including women and older people, consequently the role and status of these groups is omitted from the analysis (Hillyard, 2007). In recent decades studies pertaining to the rural have sought to address some of these research 'gaps' (ibid). There are, as Hillyard (2007) acknowledges, several examples that can be drawn on to highlight this. In addition to the examples she mentions, there is also the work of Key (2013) and Hunt and Satterlee (1987). The work of Key (2013), for example, using the county of Lincolnshire, looked at social exclusion amongst older people in rural areas, and made the argument that those who grow old in rural areas with poor service provision are at a greater risk of becoming socially excluded. The work of Hunt and Satterlee (1987), which looks at women, and their experiences of pubs in the countryside is just one example of rural research which has helped address the issue of gender (see later in this chapter). Consequently, there has been a broadening out of rural research resulting in a developing understanding of rural lives. Equally important there has been a shift from the 'social turn' to the 'cultural turn' as a means to understand the rural. The cultural interpretation has been particularly prominent in studies researching the various 'post-productivist' formations.

The cultural turn in the context of this research is understood as engaging with culture to help explore rurality and rural life<sup>2</sup>. The work of Cloke (1994) can be interpreted as being influenced by the cultural turn. For example, he has been concerned with how various discourses, including those of policy and everyday life, construct, negotiate and experience rurality (Cloke, 1994:165). Through his analysis Cloke (1994) makes the argument that, as a result of representations in media such as holiday and leisure brochures, rurality and rural lifestyles are being consumed as commodities, resulting in rural spaces becoming increasing 'commodified'. For him the imagined and lived experiences of rurality are being constructed in line with the interests of a particular group (ibid). The representations of rural spaces and attractions in, for example, tourist literature tend to be 'officially sanctioned' representations; that is, they have gained 'approval' from tourist boards or Heritage England. In this respect they give credibility to a particular social construction of rurality but *also* restrict the grand narratives of rurality and rural living. For example, they portray rurality in a way which best suits their needs and is often at the expense of the needs of others (Cloke, 1994). Tied in with the above discussion, Cloke, (1994:175) also makes the point that some of the main constructions of rurality are, to a degree, underpinned by the rural idyll, which is 'incompatible' with issues such as rural poverty, deprivation and, exclusion. By bringing this to the forefront, Cloke (1994) is, basically, inviting rural researchers to explore social constructions of rurality as a means to investigate perceptions and experiences of actual rural living; consequently, bringing knowledge and understanding to the influence of the idyll on those who inhabit rural space.

When trying to make sense of the rural idyll and its role in the perceptions of the village pub the work of Bell (2006) and Short (2006) proved useful. Short (2006) provides a long historical perspective on the development of the rural idyll and offers an

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<sup>2</sup> Influenced by the Collins English Dictionary (2007:278) culture is interpreted, by the researcher, to mean the symbolism, representations, identities, ideas, practices, attitudes and behaviours of a particular group or society.



understanding of how rural idylls have been produced that deny what actually exists in the rural. This denial, it can be argued, has been fuelled by a strong appetite, particularly from those who have experience of the urban, for the ideals contained within various versions of the rural idyll, namely serenity, harmony, community togetherness (Short, 2006). Consequently, when these ideas have been threatened attempts have been made to protect them. This is seen in the work of Walker (2013) who shows, drawing on two historical events in Lincoln (The Lincoln Cattle Market and The April Horse Fair), that when unpleasant realities of rural living have impinged on this ideal of the countryside, dominant social groupings (in this case the middle classes) have acted, through methods such as planning, to expel these from the city. This has then reinforced a particular image of rurality and rural living. This process continues today. For example, some published testimonials of rural living from rural residents in Lincolnshire overlook changes such as service decline and community conflict over land development in a rather blasé manner and posit their village as retaining beauty and community solidarity (Best Kept Villages and Small Towns Competition, 2012). Given this discussion, it can be argued that constructions of the rural idyll continue to be moulded and elevated around the desires of particular social groupings residing in both the urban and the rural. Thus, the rural idyll can be interpreted as a concept that is continually socially and culturally charged. This idea is seen further within the work of Bell (2006).

Bell (2006) provides a critical account of idyllic rurality and argues that middle-class imagination is underpinning the production of the rural idyll. Thus, in a similar manner to Cloke (1994:177), Bell (2006) suggests that the rural idyll is underpinned by power and affluence. This is demonstrated through his argument showing how different types of rural idyll (media, tourist, gastro), are producing particular images of rurality and rural living, which are impacting on our perceptions and experiences of the rural. By engaging with the work of Bell (2006) I was able to comprehend how and why the

negative experiences of the village pub (discussed later in this chapter) were ignored or ‘glossed over’ by some participants in order to preserve particular images of the village pub and rural living. This in turn helped me to make sense of not only the imagined but also the lived experience of the village pub where nostalgia can tint perceptions and experiences helping to reinforce particular images of rurality and rural living (see chapters 7 and 9).

By engaging with the cultural turn and the works of Bell (2006); Cloke (1994) and Short, (2006) I have been able to comprehend how the village pub is entangled with notions of the rural idyll and how this has helped inform and propel rural inhabitants’ perceptions and experiences of the village pub (see chapter 7). The work of Cloke (1994) and Short (2006) has also enhanced my understanding of some of the reasons why rural idylls are in a constant state of flux, helping me to contextualise and make sense of my findings pertaining to rural gentrification.

Rural gentrification, defined in this thesis as the rural in-migration of affluent groups and the renovation of properties by them, has been a feature of many rural settlements (see Phillips, 1993; Phillips 2002). It can be argued that the rural idyll has underpinned its proliferation (see Phillips, 2005). For example, many affluent people have sought to live an idyllic life by moving to the countryside. As a result, a number of villages, especially those with good commuter links or recreational amenities e.g. those near the Cornish Coast, have witnessed a migration of affluent groups who have bought and renovated residential and service properties. One consequence of this has been rising property prices in many rural settlements, contributing to a displacement of less affluent groups who cannot compete in the rural housing market and who include many especially young ‘born and bred’ village residents (see Shucksmith, 2000; Woods, 2005). Another consequence has been that many village properties including service buildings have been renovated to conform to what their owners perceive to be rural and

rural living (Woods, 2011). These consequences it can be argued have further reinforced the dominant rural idyll.

Marsden *et al.* (1993) argue that different types of rurality exist, resulting from wider social, political and economic changes, namely: preserved, contested, paternalistic and clientelist (Marsden *et al.*, 1993). Halfacree (2006:56; 2007:130) however, criticises this typology arguing that it does not take account of potential rural changes. It is the work of Halfacree (2007), in particular, his model of rural space to which I now turn.

Thus far, in this chapter, it has been shown that the rural has been studied in a number of different ways, and that different researchers have attached different levels of importance to different elements such as locality, individual actors, and the social history and make-up of an area. Following Halfacree (2006, 2007) I see these elements as interwoven and of equal importance for understanding the perceptions and experiences of rurality and rural living. I arrived at this as a result of engaging with the different types of rurality literature (material, social, cultural). For example, by seeing how each of the elements (outlined above) has relevance to understanding rurality and how one element can impact on another, I believe it is impractical to attach a greater significance to one element over another. Hence, although the definition outlined in chapter 1 posits rural as a geographical location this is only one element of what I understand rural to be, the other elements being everyday experiences, and representations.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, it can be argued that different types of rural coherence exist between and within regions, in what has come to be known as the post-productivist rural. Halfacree (2006, 2007) identifies four ‘types’ of post-productivist rurality including consuming idylls. It is on this mentioned type that I now focus. By drawing on Halfacree’s (2007) model of space I have been able to explore the types of

tensions that exist between the elements of rural space in the county of Lincolnshire, more specifically in the geographical areas where data collection took place.

The majority of villages featured in this research, it can be argued, do not fit neatly into any one of Halfacree's (2007) visions of rurality. Instead they comprise elements of productivism and what Halfacree (2007:131) calls "consuming idylls". For example, villages, such as Helpringham, Heckington, Navenby and Ruskington are surrounded by agricultural scenery and production but also exhibit practices of residence, leisure (walking, cycling) and other forms of consumption, which form a large part of their spatiality (Halfacree, 2007). What is more, the sanctioned representations of these villages tend to exhibit characteristics of idyllic ruralities. For example, the Heckington Show advertisement paraphernalia (including the Heckington Show Website, 2014), the Lincolnshire Walks (2008) series and the Lincolnshire Cycle Routes (2009), to name but a few, show the villages (listed in Figure 3, chapter 2) to be serene and community orientated. The everyday perceptions and experiences of the villages in the research, it can be argued, do not fit neatly with the representations mentioned above. For example, in recent decades there have been tensions and disputes within these villages, and between different types of resident (locals and newcomers) in relation to issues such as service use and suitable housing developments (see for example, Lincolnshire Echo, 2011; Sleaford Target, 2014). At the core of many objections towards new housing developments in these villages has been the idea that they will 'spoil' the villages' character and demeanour (ibid).

A common focus in rural research and rural literature has been on the social relations between village newcomers and locals (see, for example, Pacione, 1984; Gilg, 1985). The problem with these types of study, however, is that they have tended to focus their attention on the in-migration of middle class newcomers and the social relations between this group and an *in situ* working class. This is understandable given

the social history of rural areas (see Newby, 1985) and the fact that, in general, rural areas have been witness to an in-migration of older affluent individuals (Key, 2013). However, it is important to understand that not all village newcomers are going to be from the same social class; likewise nor are locals. The work of Cloke and Thrift (1987) argues that some rural spaces have been witness to unemployed newcomers who have sought to improve their lifestyle experience by moving to areas they perceive as being pleasant and welcoming. A similar process is prevalent today. For example, some of the villages featured in this research such as Heckington, South Lincolnshire, have, as a result of increased social housing provision, seen an in-migration of unemployed and working class newcomers from large urban areas such as Nottingham. This is in addition to the in-migration of affluent newcomers. At this point it is worth mentioning that the work of Cloke and Thrift (1987) offers a different context to researching social relations in rural spaces. Rather than focusing on inter-class relations they argue that more research should be concerned with intra-class relations. This is an interesting point given, first, the findings of Elias and Scotson (1965) where tensions were found to exist between two working class groups, and second, the debates and resentments that can exist today on the part of locals in relation to who gets offered (working class local families or working class newcomers) social housing in their village (see Satherley, 2011).

Throughout this thesis the terms ‘long-standing resident’ and ‘newcomer’ are used purely to denote a participant’s length of residency. It is difficult to define what counts as a long-standing resident but from the data collected and analysed during the phases of open and substantive coding (discussed in chapter 2) it would appear that there are two types of long-standing residents: those who come from families who have resided in the same village for generations and those who have chosen to move to the village and over the course of time integrated themselves into village life. In the context

of this thesis, unless otherwise stated, long-standing residents will be taken to refer to both of these strands. The term ‘newcomers’ is also used throughout this thesis; in the context of this thesis the term will, unless otherwise stated, refer to residents who considered themselves to be new to the village and/or acclimatising to their rural life.

By drawing on the work of Halfacree (2007) I have been able to illustrate how the locality, representations and everyday experiences of the villages in this research ‘fit’ together. The above discussions show that subtle tensions can exist between existing and new residents and that the everyday lives of inhabitants do not always match the formal idyllic representations of their village. This can be seen further with the contradictions that exist between the local representations and some everyday experiences of these villages. Local community publications often use historic photographs and selective local memories to convey a rather idyllic image of their village and rural living (see Banister and Wilkinson, 1999; Helpringham History Society, 2012) These representations, however, are often based on the memories of a village minority and contradict the experienced realities for some of service provision decline, social isolation and social exclusion. This type of contradiction between representations and experiences often arises as a result of inhabitants and associated actors wanting to keep previous memories or their ideals of rural living alive (see chapter 7). Given all of the above, it can be argued that the villages in this research have a spatiality in which contradictions exist between how the rural is perceived (as idyllic) and how the rural ‘really’ is. This argument is important because it helps provide a contextualisation and understanding to the discussions in chapters 5-9. For example, it allows for recognition that within or between the facets of rural space in the villages featured in this research there can exist subtle contradictions. This in turn provides a context for understanding not only how different types of resident (i.e. long-standing and newcomers) and different groups (i.e. village residents and publicans) perceive and

experience the village pub, and the rural more generally, but also the contradictions that can exist within or between different groups' perceptions and experiences. By engaging with rural study literature (Bell, 2006; Cloke, 1994; Key, 2013; Somerville, 2013; Walker, 2103) it is possible to identify the types of contradictions that can exist within or between different groups in relation to how they remember or imagine the rural compared to how the rural 'really' is. Overall, at least four different groups can be identified:

1. Long-standing residents have a nostalgic memory of how the village used to be and this is not how the village is now.
2. Newcomers have an image of what rural living is, or should be, like (e.g. exhibiting community harmony, solidarity, where everyone knows and helps everyone else), which is not how rural living really is.
3. Newcomers have an image of what the village should look like (e.g. serene and tranquil, offering a variety of amenities including a village shop, post office and pub which exude charm and character), which is not how it really is.
4. Long-standing residents have an experience of rural living, which contradicts the image that newcomers have (of what the village is like or should be like).

These contradictions are explored throughout this thesis, more specifically within chapter 7. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the representations of the village pub from the perspectives of gender and social class. Its aim is to show that experiences of this establishment can be negative as well as positive.

One of the main media representations of the pub is that men and women of all ages frequent it. This is shown in serial dramas such as *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*, where all characters use the pub to socialise with one another. These

representations, it can be argued, continue to be very different from the reality. Literature that has explored the pub and pub space from the perspectives of gender and/or class shows that this establishment continues to operate in a manner which not only marginalises women but works to help construct and reproduce what is and what is not acceptable 'gendered' behaviour (see Hey, 1986; Jennings, 2010; Leyshon, 2005; Leyshon 2008a; Leyshon 2008b; Whitehead, 1976).

The work of Leyshon (2005, 2008a, 2008b) provides a detailed and compelling account, from the perceptions and experiences of young people, of how pub cultures and cultural drinking practices within the space of the pub contribute to the ways in which young men and young women "produce, negotiate, and experience their identity" (Leyshon, 2008a:289). In doing this Leyshon (2005, 2008a, 2008b) shows not only how young women are excluded from the main spheres of pub space and activities but also how this exclusion extends to young men who do not conform to particular drinking practices or fail to engage with pub talk. In order to understand first, how some groups continue to be excluded and second, gendered experiences of the pub, it is necessary to have a brief discussion of how pub space has been colonised as well as some of the main pub and drinking practices that seek to include some but exclude others. Leyshon (2005, 2008a, 2008b) showed that different areas of village pubs in his research were colonised by different groups. The main bar area, for example, was populated by older adult men who had already carved out their social and cultural belonging in the pub. In contrast the back room contained a group of young men who were trying to make the transition to the main bar area, whilst the snug was home to a group of under 18 marginalised males as well as women (Leyshon, 2005, 2008a, 2008b). Thus, it becomes possible to see visually that the village pub, in contrast to media representations, has acted as a public space of both social inclusion and social exclusion (Leyshon, 2005, 2008a, 2008b). This idea is confirmed by the work of Hey (1986) where it is further



seen that different areas of the pub have been colonised by different genders and that some areas of the pub, namely the vault and the taproom, have been taboo to women.

Underlying this social inclusion and exclusion within pub space, it can be argued, are drinking practices that are associated with a particular concept of masculinity. For example, Hey (1986) makes the argument that pub culture in Britain has linked beer drinking with a particular version of masculinity, namely one of physical superiority that needs replenishment. As a consequence, it can be argued, males who do not conform to drinking pints of beer or women who do are transgressing gender norms, and therefore at risk of social exclusion. A similar idea to this is seen within the work of both Leyshon (2005, 2008a) and Valentine *et al.* (2008). These studies found that some young men saw the ability to consume large quantities of alcohol while maintaining control over their bodily functions as an important skill to not only gain respect from peers but to ensure they were not ridiculed by their peers for not conforming to ideals of hegemonic masculinity<sup>3</sup>. Young males also used other methods towards this end, including being knowledgeable about local social history and key personnel in that history (see Leyshon, 2005, 2008a). Valentine *et al.* (2008) also highlight that gendered discourses on acceptable feminine behaviour continue to underpin the attitudes and behaviours of some young women. For example, the women interviewed in their study felt the need to control their drinking behaviour so as not to be seen by others as sexually promiscuous (ibid:36).

Pub literature that has explored gender experiences of the pub indicates that women have been constrained by older views and traditions (see Jennings, 2010). They have continued to be marginalised but at the same time remained integral to the functioning of hegemonic masculinity in pub spaces. For example, research has shown

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<sup>3</sup> Hegemonic masculinity can be interpreted as the qualities and practices (e.g. physical superiority, drinking pints to sustain that superiority – see Hey, 1986) that work to maintain the social positioning of men and the inferiority of women (Connell, 2005:77). For further discussion of hegemonic masculinity see Connell (2005).

that pub narrative, and expressions of that narrative through means such as sexist comments, jokes and hostility, has been used by men to subordinate women and reinforce the notion that it is a man's not a woman's privilege to visit and drink in the pub (Whitehead, 1976). Central to the continuation of hegemonic masculinity in pubs has been the ways in which male pub drinkers have perceived and constructed the role of women within pub spaces. Leyshon's work (2005, 2008b), for example, has shown that some male drinkers construct and conceive the role of women in pubs as being one of domesticity whereby they are there to serve the needs and desires of male drinkers.

Given that barmaids and waitresses through the serving of sustenance to male drinkers have conformed to the role outlined above, it is not surprising that in these roles women have been 'accepted' into pub spaces (see Hey, 1986; Leyshon 2005; Leyshon, 2008b). Even here, however, control has been exerted over women. For example, not only have barmaids often had to rely on 'tips' by drinkers (the majority of who are male) to 'top up' their low wages but also in accepting 'tips' barmaids have been expected, by those who tip, to bestow more of their time and attention towards them (Hey, 1986). At this point it is worth mentioning that women, as shown in the work of Hey (1986:43-44) have consciously drawn on personal qualities such as looks and charm to entice 'tipping' by male drinkers. Given this, it can be argued that women themselves have, to a degree, invited and thus helped to reinforce hegemonic masculinity in pub spaces. In recent decades women have formed an increasing client base of the pub but male dominance has continued to pervade pub spaces (Jennings, 2010). For example, in my personal experience it continues to be an accepted common practice for men to enter a village pub on their own but not for women. This, it can be argued, is another way in which hegemonic masculinity within pub spaces has flourished and led to gender inequalities. This idea is one that can be confirmed by research. For example, various studies (e.g. Hey, 1986; Hunt and Satterlee, 1987;

Whitehead, 1976) have not only found that it has traditionally been unacceptable for unaccompanied women to be present in pub spaces but that those women who defy the acceptable conventions are seen as being disreputable.

As a consequence of the above it is understandable why women have often expressed their pub experiences in predominantly negative terms. Hey (1986) not only details her own negative experiences of the pub but uses them to underpin her work and arguments on how patriarchal social relations have been played out in pub spaces. Furthermore, Whitehead (1976:176) details that her 'acceptance' into a rural pub in Herefordshire came only after a married male friend overtly likened their relationship to one of brother and sister. These examples serve to highlight further the power relations that have been present within pub spaces. Although many young women have negative experiences of the village pub, research has shown that they, along with young males, see their local pub as being not only a social hub but also an indicator of rurality (Leyshon 2005, 2008b). Furthermore, some women have craved participation in this ideal of the pub as a social hub of village life (see Hunt and Satterlee, 1987). These types of views and desires by women may explain why some women have challenged the dominant power relations within rural pub spaces.

In an attempt to resist or challenge some of the ways in which men have exerted control over women in rural pub spaces some women have consciously engaged in practices such as carving out their own identity, in pub spaces, though, for example joining female darts and pool teams, 'dressing down', and creating their own spaces to partake in drinking practices (for a discussion on some of these practices see Leyshon, 2008b:278-279). By joining, for example, female darts teams' women have been accorded 'power' in two ways. First, it has provided them with an opportunity to have a break from the drudgery of work and family life, and second it has allowed them

accepted access into pub spaces without having to be accompanied by their male relations (Hunt and Satterlee, 1987).

In spite of the fact that women, have been accorded more acceptance into pub spaces, it can be argued that they still have had to endure patriarchal social relations within these spaces. This is seen explicitly in the work of Hunt and Satterlee (1987), where it is argued that less importance was attached to women's dart matches compared to those of males. Consequently, once 'accepted' into pub spaces women have still had to impose their presence. One of the main ways in which they have tried to do this is by outnumbering males on specific evenings (i.e. women's dart evenings) and making men, as opposed to women, the subject of teasing and jokes (ibid:597). Even though the above serves to show that some women have actively sought more access to the village pub the desire for access is not universal across female populations. Hunt and Satterlee (1987), for example, found that middle class women, due to having a varied social life facilitated by a high income and high levels of personal mobility, did not accord the same level of social kudos to the village pub as the working class women featured in their research. In the following discussion of class, the aim is not to examine class relations *per se* but to show how different social groups have engaged with different practices as a means to accept or exclude group members.

The majority of pub custom, over the decades, has come from working class men (see Selley, 1927; Jennings, 2007; Pratten, 2007b). Here the pub has typically been used as a place of socialisation among those who live and work in close proximity to one another (Mass Observation, 1943). Underlying acceptance into pub spaces of working class groups have traditionally been shared characteristics such as kin and local knowledge. As a consequence, individuals not possessing these characteristics have been at a high risk of being marginalised within working class pub spaces (Hunt and Satterlee, 1986b). Furthermore, even if they did manage to secure acceptance through

persistent engagement with the pub, they often continued, due to their lack of shared kinship, to remain on the outside of the group (ibid). This serves to highlight further the exclusionary practices that have operated within pub spaces. These practices, however, are not common to all groups within the village pub: different groups have operated different inclusionary and exclusionary practices. For example, Hunt and Satterlee (1986b) found that round buying<sup>4</sup> did not play a significant role in working class group acceptance within pub spaces but it did in middle class group acceptance. This latter point is supported by Heley (2008) who found that round buying was an important practice of the middle class group in his research.

In recent decades the pub, despite remaining a predominantly working class leisure pursuit, has risen in popularity amongst middle class men and women (Jennings, 2007). Their use of the establishment, however, can be seen to differ markedly from the practices of working class groups. For example, in contrast to the working class group, Hunt and Satterlee (1986b), Hunt (1991) found that the middle class group in their study used the pub as a 'springboard' to facilitate other social engagements including formal and informal parties. In this context practices such as round buying and the willingness to 'open up' their homes to other group members were essential practices to becoming accepted into the group and maintaining group membership (Hunt and Satterlee, 1986b; Hunt, 1991). Gaining acceptance into this type of social group thus requires a different set of practices to those outlined above in relation to the working class. For example, if individuals are going to regularly participate in practices such as 'treating' and round buying then they need to be in receipt of disposable income. In the case of this type of group it can be argued that the pub provides a base from which an incremental process of group membership can commence. Practices such as round buying can act as a token to gain group membership but, once 'initiated' into the group,

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<sup>4</sup> The purchasing of drinks by one person, at one time, for each member of the group with the expectation that others members of the group will later do the same (adapted from Collins English Dictionary (2007:1415))

members are 'expected' to become involved in other forms of home-led group social engagements such as informal lunches and formal dinner parties (Hunt, 1991). Throughout this process members regulate themselves. Informed by shared social-cultural norms, they follow unwritten rules of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour at each engagement (ibid). By default of being inclusionary the practices employed by these groups can also be exclusionary. For example, Hunt (1991:417) found that when group members failed to follow the 'expected' socio-cultural practices of a particular social engagement event then their 'access' to future events of that calibre became difficult as other members decided not to invite them. Given the above it can be argued that whilst the pub plays a role in the social lives of middle class groups and acts as a facilitator towards group membership it is drinking practices, as much as the pub itself, which they accord importance to. This idea is supported by the work of Heley (2008) who argues that the pub provides a space where members of the 'New Squirearchy' (a group of middle class residents who aspire to recreate the role and lifestyles of the rural 'gentry') can display aesthetical props (e.g. driving Range Rovers) and play out practices such as round buying to help form and sustain their social identity.

As a consequence of the above discussions, it becomes clear that marginalisation has existed within different social groupings both inside and outside pub spaces. What is more, it can be argued that pub spaces and drinking practices have, in some instances, facilitated this marginalisation. Thus it also becomes clear that the pub inadvertently helps produce and negotiate exclusion within social groups. Although Hunt and Satterlee (1986b) found that different groups migrated to different pubs, this does not always happen. For example, pubs can find that under their roof different spaces or segments of the same space, e.g. the main bar area, can be occupied by different social groups, each with their own customary inclusionary and exclusionary practices being

played out (personal experience from visiting village pubs during data collection). Research confirms a similar argument to this. For example, it has been shown that, despite pubs becoming more open plan, there have remained identifiable group spaces with working class males dominating the bar area and the middle class, in particular couples, occupying more 'closed spaces' such as the dining area (Smith, 1981:3-13). The work of Smith (1981) also highlights that the different groups did not tend to socially engage with one another. Thus, while a village pub *per se* may appear from the outside to be inclusionary and show community togetherness it can in fact be contributing to the isolation and marginalisation of various individuals, including women and those who have not been able to secure or sustain social group membership.

By looking at the pub through the perspectives of gender and class it becomes clear that pubs and pub spaces (despite what is shown in serial drama representations) are, at the same time, both inclusionary and exclusionary. By applying Halfacree's (2007) model of space to the village pub it also becomes clear that, on the whole, it has a spatiality in which contradictions exist between how the pub is depicted in the media and how the pub 'really' is. For example, whilst the village pub has scenery of, and is represented in popular media as exhibiting, social inclusion and interaction, the everyday lives of pub goers, and those attempting to gain access into pub spaces, show that running alongside community togetherness exist tensions, conflicts and divisions between and within different gender and class groupings.

In conclusion there have been many ways in which the rural has been studied. In detailing some of these this chapter has set out why there is need to engage with the 'cultural turn' when researching rural spaces as well as how and why the work of Halfacree (2007) came to inform this research. Furthermore, by applying Halfacree's (2007) model of rural space to the villages featured in this research this chapter provides a wider context to the arguments developed throughout the thesis. At the core of this

chapter is a critique of the rural idyll. Through this critique it becomes evident that the rural idyll continues to be produced, in a manner that serves only to accentuate imagined ideals of rural living, and is thus helping lead to contradictions between the idyllic perception of the rural and some of the ‘realities’ of rural living. As a consequence this chapter helps provides theoretical context to both the findings in chapter 7 (The village pub: A cultural icon), and the emerged theory, which is discussed at length in the conclusion chapter – chapter 9. This contextualisation is seen further when the chapter goes on to engage with pub literature, more specifically that which looks at the negative experiences of the pub. By showing that the village pub has been a site of hegemonic masculinity, which has simultaneously functioned to create social inclusion and marginalisation, this section of the chapter has sought to highlight some of the more negative realities of village pub spaces and experiences. This section of the chapter thus provides a backdrop to the findings in the analysis chapters, especially chapter 6 (The village public house: A social hub) and allows for the consideration that representations and experiences of the village pub are not always ones of endearment, positivity and social inclusion.



## Chapter 4: The historical field of the English public house

For many the pub can be summed up as “... a place where you can buy a drink and drink it without the obligation to do anything else, such as buying a meal” (Gorham, 1950:16). Although commonplace in the English vocabulary today the terms public house and pub are only relatively recent inventions. For example, up until the late seventeenth century social drinking places were termed inns, taverns and/or alehouses (see Brandwood, *et al.*, 2004; Davis, 1981; Jennings, 2007). Furthermore, as the years have advanced the pub and its economic, social and cultural importance has changed. Many of the developments that have occurred to the English pub, it can be argued, have been in response to changes that have occurred in the wider society including the development of capitalism and the ever evolving way in which alcohol is viewed (both politically and socially) and consumed. It is as a result of all the above that this chapter is developed. The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief historical background of the development of the pub that will help to contextualise the analysis chapters that follow. This composition will, amongst other things, address the point of decline in the pubs economic, social and cultural importance over time as well as critically appraise some of the regulation of the pub and the breweries. In fulfilling these aims, it will document the trend in numbers of pubs in Lincolnshire and will specify the decline in number, since 1937, of the villages featured in the data collection of this research.

The pub has, in one way or another, existed for many centuries. It is possible to argue that it has always been more than a place to buy refreshments. For example, one could describe it as a place where people can meet, interact with one another, purchase refreshments and in some cases reside over a period of time. Whilst the term pub did not exist in medieval England, drinking establishments, which resemble the features of the

pub, namely being a place of social interaction and providing refreshments, certainly did. It is possible to identify three categories of social drinking establishment in medieval England: the inn, the tavern and the alehouse (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). Inns catered for travellers, they provided overnight lodgings as well as alcoholic beverages (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). Taverns were mainly limited to large urban areas, specialised in the sale of wine and catered for the middle to upper classes (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). Alehouses were the most prevalent type of drinking establishment, for basic everyday drinking, and were open to all. Furthermore, they were a common meeting place for local people and consequently contributed to the social identity of many, particularly rural, communities (*ibid*).

It is difficult to quantify just how many drinking establishments existed in early modern England. The work of Clark (1983), however, provides an overview of the general trends between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The importance of Clark's (1983) work cannot be underestimated. It allows for an identification of not only how the number of drinking establishments has over the course of time changed but also how their economic, social and cultural importance has changed. In the sixteenth century the pattern of drinking establishments varied across the country. By making use of the 1577 Government survey of Inns, Taverns and Alehouses in England Clark (1983:42) gives an overall indication of these differences. In Lincolnshire, as in most other parts of the country, the number of Alehouses (702) was significantly more than the number of Inns and Taverns combined (64). However in comparison to other rural counties, with the exception of Yorkshire (3674), Derbyshire (726), and Middlesex (720), Lincolnshire had a significantly higher number of alehouses (Clark, 1983:42). It is difficult to ascertain with certainty the reasons why there was an upward trend in the number of alehouses in the sixteenth century. It is however likely that wider societal change was a significant contributory factor. Several studies have made the argument

that economic factors were the key driving force behind the growth in the number of alehouses and their popularity amongst some members of the general public (Clark, 1983; Wrightson, 1981). According to both Clark (1983) and Wrightson (1981) more individuals were actively setting up alehouses and selling ale as a means to survive in early modern England and that this partly accounts for their increasing number in this time. An additional explanation that can be put forward to help explain why the number of alehouses was constantly increasing during this time is that it was a response to the increasing population, the growing popularity of the alehouse and a need to cater for demand (Clark, 1983). One reason for the growth in popularity of the alehouse during the sixteenth century, it can be argued, resides with the services it offered and a demand, amongst some of the population, to consume those services (Clark, 1983; Wrightson, 1981). Wrightson (1981), for example, highlights not only that the social function (e.g. providing a communal gathering place) of the alehouse was important to some parishioners but that the alehouse had an economic function and offered hopped beer, which was perceived by the general population as being essential to the nutritional state of the majority of the general population.

Although popular amongst some parishioners it is important to recognise that all did not frequent the alehouse and that those who did were often not able to, due to lack of finance, fully partake in the alehouse's conviviality. This is seen throughout the work of Clark (1983) where the point is made that the majority of alehouse clientele in early modern England comprised of men many of whom were either vagrants or parishioners in poverty and thus had little money to spend on refreshments and entertainments. Another important point to be raised when looking at the social importance of the alehouse in early modern England relates to the extent to which it was able to facilitate community networking. Many alehouses were small in size, overcrowded and dilapidated (Clark, 1983). Given these points, it can be argued, that even as far back as

the sixteenth century social drinking establishments only acted as a community networking facility for those wanted it to and, even then the extent to which community networking could take place was constrained by the poor physical conditions of the alehouses themselves.

Running alongside the general upward trend in the number of drinking establishments and the usage of, in particular, alehouses in the sixteenth century were morality concerns. Some members of the public, as well as those in authority, held the opinion that drinking establishments (urban and rural) were the source of inebriation, disorder and crime (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). Such views, reinforced by publications, continued throughout subsequent centuries (Jennings, 2007). They still to some extent exist today. One of the key arguments against the 2003 Licensing Act was that the introduction of longer opening hours for social drinking establishments would lead to more so-called ‘binge’ drinking, ‘anti-social’ behaviour and crime, particularly violence (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2008b). This presents the idea that social drinking establishments throughout the course of history have been viewed in a dual light. On one hand they are seen as places which provide refreshments and somewhere to meet and interact with friends/acquaintances. On the other they are seen as promoting some of the most problematic activities of any given era. Given this it is unsurprising that social drinking establishments have throughout the decades been subjected to regulation.<sup>5</sup>

The origins of licensing laws as well as excise tax can be traced back many centuries. In 1552 those who ran alehouses were required to obtain a licence from the Justices of Peace. The Justices had to assess first, whether or not a specific locality really needed an alehouse, and second, whether or not those who wanted to run an alehouse were (in terms of their character) ‘fit’ to do so (Jennings, 2007). On paper this

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<sup>5</sup> There has been an abundance of reforms and regulations applied to social drinking establishments from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The framework of this chapter, however, will only enable the author to examine the most notable and influential ones.

meant that areas would not be overrun by alehouses and only those of a 'good' character would be in charge of them. However, in reality things were very different. Not all Justices, in the decades which followed 1552, were efficient in issuing licences or closing down those alehouses which did not have a licence (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). This poor enforcement may contribute further to our understanding of why there continued to be an upward trend in the number of alehouses during the sixteenth century and why many rural counties including Lincolnshire came to be inundated with them. Furthermore, it is possible that the number of alehouses in rural areas such as Lincolnshire was much higher than documented in the 1577 survey since the poor enforcement of 1552 Act led to many areas housing 'unofficial' alehouses which did not have a licence and thus were not subjected to any kind of regulation (*ibid*).

In the centuries, which followed the sixteenth, there was the introduction of more authoritarian regulation and a change in the economic and social importance of drinking establishments.

The alehouse in the early seventeenth century functioned similarly to the way it had operated during the previous century. Its social and economic role, however, was becoming further intertwined. The alehouse, for example, was increasingly becoming a space where, amongst other things, economic transactions and market offences could be carried out; trades could be mastered; individuals such as debtors could be found and information pertaining to employment and/or gossip could be obtained (Clark, 1983). The growth in alehouse numbers and popularity amongst some of the population, continued in the seventeenth century. In Lincolnshire, the number of alehouses increased throughout the entire century but stabilised during the first few decades of the eighteenth century (Clark, 1983:53-54). It must be recognised that this was not a universal happening across the country, some counties such as Lancashire whilst seeing growth in the number of alehouses during the first half of the seventeenth century saw

little growth in the latter half but an increased growth during the early decades of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, some rural counties saw inter regional differences where some areas saw a growth in the number of alehouses and others witnessed a decline (ibid). Whilst there were geographical differences in the extent to which alehouse numbers were changing the morality concerns of the sixteenth century about alehouses continued, especially during the first half the of the seventeenth century. One of the biggest concerns surrounded the alehouse and its links with improper sexual behaviour. In early modern England alehouses were associated with prostitution and illicit affairs and there were fears amongst some, notably puritans and respectable people, that such activities and the places which facilitated them would lead to the moral fabric of families and society collapsing (Clark, 1983). The extent to which this actually occurred can be questioned. Fears are not always proportional to the actual threat, thus whilst many may have feared that the corollaries of increased numbers of alehouses and popularity of frequenting them would result in a breakdown of family life and/or public order there is no certainty that this would have actually occurred.

The morality concerns that surrounded the alehouse in the early half of the seventeenth century, particularly those pertaining to illicit sex, had, to a degree, abated by the second half of the century (Clark, 1983:265). The reasons for this are likely to be connected with the wider political, economic and social changes of the time. These wider changes, it can be argued, may even help us to understand some the changes that were taking place in terms of alehouse numbers across the country. In the years which followed the English Civil War many individuals, due to an expanding economy with better poor relief provision, increased employment and higher wages, experienced a growth in their own personal economic prosperity (Clark, 1983). Consequently, the alehouse clientele, although in many instances still the same people, increasingly comprised labourers with increased wages and skilled workers as opposed to those in

poverty (ibid). This change, it can be argued, contributed to the changing social and economic role of the alehouse in early modern England. The alehouse, for example, was (due to the changes mentioned above and the lessening of the Puritan influence) becoming more respectable and in doing so was attracting more varied clientele including those from the higher social groups of the time; this in turn was further adding to its new found respectability (Clark, 1983:225). It can be argued that the alehouse towards the end of the seventeenth century was helping to facilitate and sustain its newly acquired respectability. For example, not only were alehouses being physically improved but they were increasingly becoming much more integral to the employment economy. According to Clark (1983:229-230) the alehouse frequently acted as a space where craftsmen were able to develop personal and business networks, obtain employment and, seek financial help in times of hardship though a temporary relief fund. This further highlights not only the social and economic importance of the alehouse in early modern England but the interconnectedness between these two variables.

Throughout the seventeenth century the alehouse or the pub (as it was starting to be called) had been subject to numerous regulations.<sup>6</sup> In addition to obtaining a yearly licence alehouse keepers were not allowed to permit drunkenness in their establishment and were prohibited from allowing drinking to occur during religious services (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). Although some sources specify the regulations which alehouse keepers had to abide by (see Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Porritt, 1895), as well as the types of punishment that those who disobeyed the law could face (see Porritt, 1895), they fail to provide any details on how the regulations were actually enforced. Consequently, it is hard for the reader to comprehend how the regulations documented

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on the rise of regulation of the alehouse in early modern England, see Clark (1983). Towards the end of the seventeenth century the term “pub” was also being applied to the inn and the tavern despite there being some differences between them. Consequently, it would appear that the pub was an umbrella term, used to describe all categories of social drinking establishments (Jennings, 2007).

above could have been effective at achieving their aims, which included, according to Brandwood *et al.* (2004), curbing drinking. For example, unless an efficient system of enforcement was in place, whereby Justices or other individuals in authority were, for instance, making regular spot checks on establishments and consistently punishing those who were not following the regulations, it is unlikely that many publicans would have abided by the rules.

In addition to having to put up with an ever increasing set of rules, those in the pub trade had to endure newly imposed excise duty (*ibid*). This measure is still in operation today. As in times gone by it remains a concern for many involved in the pub trade. The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) routinely campaigns for a freeze on or a lowering of excise duty on beer to help ensure the survival of, in particular, village pubs (see [camra.org.uk](http://camra.org.uk)). This serves to explicitly highlight that the repercussions of policies can be felt for many centuries after their implementation. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which excise duty impacted on the survival of pubs in the seventeenth century; it is possible to suggest that it may have contributed to some smaller alehouses being unsustainable. It must, however, be recognised that on the whole, there was, as outlined above, stabilisation or slight increases in the number of alehouses in many of the English counties of the time (see Clark, 1983).

The first few decades of the eighteenth century witnessed an increase in spirit production and consumption. To supply demand there was an upsurge in the number of gin shops across the country, most notably in urban areas. For example, London in 1739 in addition to its 5,975 existing alehouses had 8,695 retailers of spirits (Haydon, 1994:90). Although there were rising numbers of premises where customers could ‘buy and takeaway’ spirits the publican also began to retail spirits (Clark, 1988). During the early part of the eighteenth century onsite-drinking establishments not only began to expand their produce on sale but also continued to have economic importance. Inns, for



example, continued to play an important role in the country's transport network. Not only did they offer travellers and their horses a place to stop, rest and recuperate with subsistence and lodgings but as the century progressed they provided a hire service of chaises and in doing so became an important facet in the delivery of mail and the movement of people from one geographical area to another (Jennings, 2007). In addition they acted as a market place for trading provisions, notably agricultural produce and in many instances provided a base for the carriage and/or storage of goods as well as rooms where goods carriers and customers could meet and interact (ibid). It can be argued that intertwined with this economic importance was social importance. For example, by offering spaces where people could meet and interact, pubs were helping to facilitate the creation and/or strengthening of business, social and personal networks between carriers as well as between customers. The social importance of the pub in the eighteenth century is seen further when attention is turned to the cultural importance of drinking establishments. During this time pubs became culturally known as places where parliamentary candidates held meetings and where the official business of Justices, coroners and those involved in local or central government such as excise took place (see Haydon, 1994; Jennings, 2007). In catering for these groups of people the pub also had a social importance, in so far as it acted as a venue for a variety of leisure activities including musical events and celebratory dinners, many of which were attended by the affluent of the day (Jennings, 2007).

Towards the end of eighteenth century, however, the importance as well as the number of pubs in some areas of the country begun to decline (Clark, 1983; Jennings, 2007). It can be argued that there were several interconnected factors behind this contraction including changes linked with industrialisation such as urbanisation. By the end of the eighteenth century some of the socially and political aware, amongst them the well-educated and economically prosperous were beginning to overlook the pub in

search of other ways to spend their time and money (Clark, 1983). The contraction of the pubs population and activities, it can be argued, was further exacerbated by the fact that the population was rapidly growing and that in many, particularly agricultural, areas there was large-scale unemployment and a decline in real wages (ibid). Thus, not only were some of the more prosperous seeking and choosing other forms of leisure activities but those experiencing poverty were visiting and partaking less frequently due to their increased family responsibilities and/or financial constraints. The impact of this was a decline in the overall usage and a decline in the scale of the activities played out within the pub (ibid).

Another factor pertaining to the contraction in the number of pubs as well as their social and economic importance, it can be argued, was the increasing reforms and regulations to them. In 1729 the granting of licences to publicans was restricted to official gatherings of local Justices (Gorham, 1950). This amendment, could be argued to be a positive one because it meant that those making the decisions had some knowledge about the locality and thus were in a better position to decide whether or not an alehouse was needed or even desired by communities (ibid). Although spirits particularly gin, had, partly as a consequence of legislation to reduce production and consumption, gone through a phase of being ostracised by the mid-eighteenth century, their popularity started to once more increase in the latter decades of the century<sup>7</sup> (see Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). As was the case in the sixteenth century, fears amongst certain sections of the population were rising about the pub and the activity of drinking, with the argument that they were encouraging society's worst tendencies (see Clark, 1983; Jennings, 2007). Such fears are likely to have been partly the result of printed material. Publications in the eighteenth century on a frequent basis insinuated that pubs corrupted

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<sup>7</sup> The rise of spirit production and consumption continued to rise through the subsequent century peaking in the decade of the 1870s (Jennings, 2007). A particularly urban occurrence during this time was the development of the gin palace that catered for customer demand of spirit consumption (Girouard, 1984; Jennings, 2007). For more information on the gin palace and its development see Girouard (1984).

those who frequented them and were dens of criminal activity (Jennings, 2007). Whether this was actually the case, however, remains unclear, although these publications were certainly influential in initiating a so-called ‘crackdown’ on the pub. Acting on the concerns expressed in publications and by clerical Justices a ‘Royal Proclamation against Vice, Profaneness and Immorality’ was issued in 1787 (Jennings, 2007). Whilst this was not a piece of legislation it was a powerful rhetoric. Following the proclamation a more authoritarian approach, at least on paper, to the regulating of the pub was adopted. There was to be, for example, stricter enforcement of the no drinking during church service rule, the withdrawal of licences if publicans contravened the terms of their licence and the introduction of specified closing times (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Gorham, 1950; Jennings, 2007). In actuality there was little in the way of a countrywide ‘crackdown’ on pubs. Whilst some areas did adopt and enforce some of the above measures, others did not (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). Consequently, it would appear that some Justices were either extremely lax in fulfilling their duties or not entirely convinced that the pub was a source of substantial social immorality.

The nineteenth century continued to see a decline in the economic, social and cultural importance of the pub in some areas of the country. The level of this decline, however, was not universal; some areas witnessed less of a decline than others. The work of Winstanley (1976) for example, shows that rural pubs continued to have a significant importance in the transport of goods and passengers through to the early decades of the twentieth century. The factors discussed above along with additional factors were, it can be argued, underpinning the decline. For example, in the nineteenth century many of the official activities of both justices and coroners were beginning to be transferred to town halls or newly constructed court buildings (Jennings, 1995). Furthermore, as the development of the railway began to supersede the coaching trade pubs in some areas of the country began to witness a significant decline in the take up of

their services such as the hiring of horse-drawn chaises and the provision of overnight lodgings (Haydon, 1994; Jennings, 2007). This is not to say that the pub no longer had importance in these areas, it did; as the works of both Ewart Evans (1975) and Winstanley (1976) show. The strength of that importance, however, had, in the majority of instances, contracted. For example, although pubs continued to have an economic importance in the carrying and holding of goods the increasing development of specialised warehouses was impacting on the level of that importance (Jennings, 2007). Furthermore, although alehouses in the sixteenth century were socially and culturally renowned for trading at village fetes and being a venue where clandestine weddings as well as social gatherings pertaining to christenings, funerals and congratulatory celebrations took place by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such activities were no longer the core of social activity in the pub (Clark, 1983). There continued to be a social and cultural importance to the pub throughout the nineteenth century, however, in comparison to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, other recreational activities were now more generally being played out within and outside the walls of the pub. For example, activities such as playing games, singing, the staging of sports as well as pre and post meet sport gatherings had become a common feature of many pubs by the nineteenth century (Jennings, 2007).

The nineteenth century witnessed an abundance of reforms and regulations pertaining to the licensing of social drinking establishments. Many of the changes brought about by licensing legislation had consequences for the number of pubs across the country, their social, economic and cultural importance, and the customer. The work of Clark (1983) shows that by the start of the nineteenth century many rural areas had, partly as a result of authoritarian magisterial controls, witnessed a decline in the number of drinking establishments and, as a consequence, the accessibility of the pub to ordinary parishioners was contracting. In Lincolnshire there was more stability in the

number of alehouses (Clark, 1983:57-58). Even here, however, it can be argued that the accessibility of the pub to ordinary parishioners was becoming increasingly inhibited as a consequence of some of the reforms and regulations of the time. For example, various laws including the Wilson-Patten Act, the 1864 and 1865 Public House Closing Acts and the 1872 and 1874 Licensing Acts put restrictions on opening times for pubs (Jennings, 2007). It can be argued that these reforms, whilst not the sole contributor, played a part in the decline of parishioner's accessibility to the pub and naturally had an impact on the social importance of the establishment. For example, Sunday, the one day of the week when people were fortunate to have a full day of leisure was the one day of the week that the pub, as a consequence of provisions contained within Licensing Acts, had restrictive opening hours (Jennings, 2007).

By 1828 a number of the measures contained in previous licensing legislation were consolidated and inserted into a 'new' piece of legislation. The 1828 Alehouse Act, whilst preserving some of the measures, revoked all previous legislation (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Gorham, 1950; Jennings, 2007). This Act was, in the main, conservative. For example, pubs were not allowed to open during religious services and licences were dependant on publicans agreeing and adhering to specified conditions such as not allowing drunkenness, disorder or criminal activity to occur on the premises (Jennings, 2007). In the midst of these 'old-school' traditions, however, there was an indication in this Act that the Government was slowly edging towards more liberal as opposed to authoritarian policies on social drinking establishments. For example, the Act removed some of the powers bestowed on the Justices in previous legislation; they were no longer allowed to suppress pubs (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Gorham, 1950). This may help to explain why in the decade of the 1820s there was in some areas such as Leicestershire, Shropshire and Oxfordshire a stabilisation or very slight increase in the number of drinking establishments (see Clark, 1983:57). Although both Brandwood

*et al.* (2004) and Gorham (1950) make the point that Justices, as a consequence of the 1828 Act, were no longer allowed to suppress pubs, they fail to detail who was actually responsible for enforcing the regulations contained within the Act and how they were to be enforced. This is of significance because, if readers are not provided adequate detail on such matters, it makes it exceedingly difficult for them to critically assess whether or not the measures contained within the Act had the potential to reach their intended goals such as reducing excessive drinking.

In 1830, the Beer Act was passed<sup>8</sup>. This led to a split situation in terms of licensing. As a consequence of the 1828 Act, which remained in force, those who were already involved in the pub trade who had a licence as well as those who wanted to retail other types of alcohol (i.e. spirits) alongside the retail of beer were required to obtain an annual licence from the Justices (Jennings, 2007). However, in contrast those who wanted to concentrate on the retailing of beer only were able to pay a small fee to excise and obtain a license (*ibid*). At its core therefore the 1830 Beer Act (partly as an antidote to the domination of tied pubs and Government unpopularity) gave anybody who paid rates the opportunity to retail beer without obtaining a licence from the Justices (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Gorham, 1950; Spiller, 1972). This piece of legislation came with consequences, one of which was an increase in the number of premises retailing beer (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). For the consumer, it can be argued this was a positive consequence. For example, in areas where there had been a decline in the number of drinking establishments in previous decades the introduction of one or more beerhouses increased the accessibility of beer to the everyday individual (Jennings, 2007). For the existing pub, it can be argued that the Beer Act and its consequences, notably increases in beerhouse numbers and rates of drunkenness, played a role in facilitating its growth in number and improvement during

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<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of how the 1830 Beer Act came to be passed see Jennings (2007: 57-72).

the nineteenth century. For example, many proprietors of drinking establishments, as a means to compete against the beerhouse, set about applying for full licences so that their produce repertoire exceeded that of the beerhouse. In many instances Justices were obliging in granting these licenses as it meant that they had control over the establishment (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). The redevelopment of some geographical areas in the nineteenth century meant that some areas lost their pubs but others, as a result of magistrates redistributing licences, gained them (Jennings, 2007). Whilst this would have resulted in improved accessibility and facilities for some, others would have seen their accessibility to the pub decline.

Despite increases in the number of beerhouses, drunkenness and the concerns of many, in authority, about its destructive impact on social order, the 1830 Beer Act remained in place for a considerable number of years. There were additional policies (namely the introduction of character references and the raising of the licence fee<sup>9</sup>) implemented to try and offset some of the predicaments that the Act had contributed to. These, however, it can be argued, were never really adequate enough to halt the ever increasing number of beerhouses or minimise drunkenness. An 1850 report, for example, found that the character reference “was inefficient and did not prevent undesirables from obtaining licences” (Select Committee of the House of Lords, 1850, cited in Jennings, 2007:66). Given the above, it would appear that the then Government were still, in the main, more committed to liberal as opposed to tighter regulation.

Nearly forty years after the implementation of the 1830 Beer Act the Government started to reinstate more authoritarian regulation on pubs and beerhouses. The introduction of the 1869 Wine and Beerhouse Act, for instance, led to the licensing of beerhouses coming under the control of Justices who were able to refuse both new licences and ones that were up for renewal (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004, Jennings, 2007).

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<sup>9</sup> See Brandwood *et al.* (2004); Jennings (2007)

This piece of legislation was swiftly followed by another. The 1872 Licensing Act, amongst other things, incorporated the 1869 provisions, offered a cheaper alternative six day licence (in a bid to reduce the numbers of pubs which traded on a Sunday), and increased the penalties for those who broke the terms of their licence (Jennings, 2007:167-168). The measures associated with these pieces of legislation, it can be argued, had both positive and negative consequences for the pub and its customers. The reissuing of power to the Justices did have an effect on the number of premises retailing alcohol and the facilities of public houses. There was, for example, a considerable decline in the number of beerhouses and the quality of many public houses was improved (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Jennings, 2007). On one hand this can be seen as a positive change for the consumer as it provided them with better facilities and surroundings to enjoy their drinking, talking and games. On the other hand, variations in licensing practices would have meant that parishioners, in some areas, would have been witness once again to a decline in their ability to access a pub.

The 1872 Act had long lasting important consequences for the consumer and marked a change in direction when it came to the issue of drunkenness. As a consequence of the 1872 Act it became a criminal offence to be drunk in a public place (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2007b). Traditionally those who got drunk were morally frowned upon but, as a rule, did not feel the wrath of the courts. For example, it tended to be those who served, as opposed to those who drank, alcohol who were typically brought before the courts on charges related to drunkenness (see Jennings, 2007:135-164). The introduction of this provision at least superficially seemed both logical and sensible. It signalled to the general public and those who frequented pubs that they could face penalties if they were drunk in a public place and thus would be made accountable for their actions. The problem is punishment does not always instil a sense of responsibility. In today's society it is illegal to be drunk and disorderly in a public



place and those who are caught can face prosecution. Despite this numerous individuals continue to indulge in such behaviour (see Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2007c). The nineteenth century, as has been shown, was clearly a time of much change for the pub and its customers in terms of its importance, accessibility and regulation. The century that followed, it can be argued, also turned out to be a period of change.

The work of both Ewart Evans (1975) and Winstanley (1976) highlights that whilst the economic, social and cultural importance of pubs was, in general, continuing to decline at beginning of the twentieth century they still retained a significant economic, social and cultural role in rural areas. The work of Winstanley (1976), in particular, gives an insight into the types of economic and social activities that were taking place within the rural pub, prior to the start of the Great War, whilst also showing that some locals were becoming disengaged with the establishment. In the early decades of the twentieth century the rural pub, as previously mentioned, continued to be important in the transport of people and goods (Ewart Evans, 1975; Winstanley, 1976). Geographical remoteness provides an explanation of why this was the case. Many villages were, at this time, remote and not situated near railheads as a consequence the horse and chaise remained an important mode of transport in these areas and thus the pub retained its importance by providing sustenance and lodgings for travellers and their horses (Winstanley, 1976). This was not the only economic activity where the pub retained its importance. For example, those who wanted to employ labourers or groups of people at times of harvest often used the pub as a means to find employees, likewise those looking for work would make use of the pub to seek out employment opportunities of the day (Ewart Evans, 1975; Winstanley, 1976).

Running alongside the economic role of the rural pub in the twentieth century there continued to be a social importance for those who frequented. The work of Ewart Evans (1975) shows that activities such as talking (often about work), playing games

and singing were a common occurrence in rural pubs. The activity of singing and sing-alongs played a central role in the rural pub's social function for centuries including, as the work of Dunn (1980) shows, that of the twentieth. The work of Dunn (1980:43, 48), however, also highlights that whilst singing continued to play a role in the pubs of the villages of Snape and Blaxhall (East Suffolk) during the 1970s it was a much less frequent occurrence compared to the decades of before World War Two. This serves to highlight that there has been a continuing contraction in the types of social activities played out within the pub. This is further corroborated by this piece of research. For example, whilst a couple of participants mentioned karaoke as being an activity that sporadically takes place within rural pubs today, none mentioned the type of singing detailed in the work of Dunn (1980) or Ewart Evans (1975). Dunn's (1980) work is important not only in showing how social activities have contracted in rural pubs but also in confirming further a key point discussed in chapter 3, namely that women have, due to religious and moral restrictions, traditionally remained a minority in the social activities played out there (Dunn, 1980:113). This, however, slowly began to change and by the close of the twentieth century, more women were frequenting pubs, especially in the newer drinking establishments of the night-time economy - NTE (Jennings, 2007, 2010). This, it can be argued, was one of the biggest changes that the pub in recent times has seen. There are a number of interrelated reasons for the growth of women patrons. The mid to late twentieth century saw an increasing number of women enter the job market and thus have disposable income (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2008c). Those in the pub and drinks trade recognised and capitalised on this. They, for example, in an attempt to encourage women to drink and visit pubs, improved the standard and atmosphere of pubs to make them more welcoming, retailed designer drinks and ran advertising campaigns (ibid). For many of the female participants interviewed for this research, the social importance of the rural pub lies in its ability to

provide a physical space where their family can get together, talk and enjoy each other's company.

Although the rural pub at the turn of the twentieth century continued to play a significant economic role in rural areas it has to be recognised that it was not, at this time, an establishment that could adequately sustain the costs of living for the publican and their family nor did its social importance extend to all village parishioners. The work of Winstanley (1976) explicitly emphasises that rural publicans had to supplement their income through secondary employment and that whilst some locals frequented the pub a couple of times a week others began to 'turn their back' it. This serves to reinforce the idea that whilst rural pubs in the early twentieth century continued to have economic and social importance the level of that importance was continuing to decline.

Prior to World War One there were several Licensing Acts developed and implemented, one that is worth mentioning when discussing the rural pub in particular is the 1902 Act. Justices of the Peace, as a consequence of this, were bestowed more powers. For example, if a pub was deemed, by the Justices, not fit for purpose, they could insist that improvements be made or the house be closed (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). This provision may seem perfectly reasonable, but in the long term such a provision can have problematic ramifications. From the middle of the century onwards one of the driving goals of breweries was profit (Pratten, 2007a, 2007b). Thus, if a house was not profitable, closure became a key option. In rural areas, however, to save their reputation and avoid being accused of damaging rural communities, breweries did not automatically close unprofitable pubs; instead they let them decay until the Justices demanded improvements, and then they closed them on the grounds that the costs of the improvements would significantly outstrip the financial benefits (Haydon, 1994:318). Such behaviour, it can be argued, may have contributed to the closure of some rural

pubs, whose social, economic and cultural importance had, over previous decades, been contracting.

The onset of World War One brought immense changes to the pub and its regulation. These changes, it can be argued, impacted substantially on the immediate and long-term economic, social and cultural importance of the pub. As a consequence of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), pub opening times were severely curtailed and habits such as treating servicemen and buying rounds were banned (Jennings, 2007). These restrictions, in particular the restrictive opening hours, it can be argued, helped to substantially erode the economic importance of the rural pub. For example, it naturally inhibited the extent to which the economic activities (described above) could take place. Whilst the prohibiting of buying rounds was eventually repealed, other measures were amended by further Acts of the 1920s. The 1921 Licensing Act, for example, introduced 'permitted' opening hours and the 1923 Intoxicating Liquor Act made it illegal for anybody under the age of eighteen to purchase alcohol (Jennings, 2007; Pratten, 2007a). The measures that these two Acts introduced remained in place for many decades, some, namely the minimum age to purchase alcohol, remain in force today.

After the War there continued to be a decline in the economic, social and cultural importance of the establishment. Whilst part of this decline can be attributed to tighter regulation it is possible to link the decline to wider economic, social and political changes. During and after World War One there was a decline in alcohol consumption (Jennings, 2007). This decline it can be argued was fuelled by price and changing attitudes. In the decades that followed the War the price of alcohol continually increased (see Jennings, 2007:194-195) and there is much evidence to suggest that if prices increase then consumption, generally, decreases (see Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2007e). Furthermore, in the inter-war period there was, according to Haydon (1994), a general move in attitudes, influenced by amongst other things the post war flu epidemic,

towards sobriety and moderation. Running alongside, partly as a consequence of declining levels of alcohol consumption, the number of pubs was contracting. Many of the newly built housing estates did not have pubs and the clearance of the slums in the 1930s led to many pubs being demolished but not being replaced due to a reluctance from Justices to grant new licences (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). This reduction in the number of pubs meant that they became less accessible to people and this, coupled with the fact that attitudes were changing, contributed to the already contracting economic, social and cultural role of the pub.

Although the economic, social and cultural importance of the pub continued to contract during the first quarter of the twentieth century, it still, as Mass Observation (1943) showed, retained an importance; that importance, however, was smaller than in any previous period. The Mass Observation (1943) study showed that in the years leading up to Second World War the pub, whilst seeing a decline in patrons, continued to be a place of social activity where, just as in previous decades, sing-alongs and games were played out. Likewise the study also highlighted that there continued to be economic importance attached to the establishment. For example, in addition to providing physical spaces for various groups such as savings clubs and Trade Unions to carry out their business some pubs also helped to facilitate the growth of other tradesmen such as hawkers who would often use the pub as a place to sell their products which often included pies (Mass Observation, 1943). The Second World War had consequences for the importance of pubs and the number of pubs. To take the first of these assertions the consequences were, unlike World War One, somewhat positive. During the Second World War the pub was seen, for example, as a place that boosted morale and was important to the war effort (Jennings, 2007). During this time, there was an increase in the number of patrons (*ibid*). These factors, it can be argued, may have led to a halting and in some instances slight reversal in the contraction of the pub's

social importance that had taken place in previous years. Whilst the pub was seeing a renewed interest in its social importance during the Second World War, the War itself led to pubs in some areas, notably London's East End and Dock Cities such as Portsmouth and Hull, being obliterated and some publicans losing their lives (Jennings, 2007). Consequently, not everyone who wanted to feel the social importance of the pub was always able to do so.

The renewed interest in the pub during the Second World War was one that was not sustained in the decades following the war. There was, for example, a continued decline in the number and usage of, particularly, rural pubs. Ewart Evans (1975:140) makes the point that drinking establishments "were an essential part of the countryside up to the time when motor transport came to dominate the roads". Since greater personal mobility offers increased opportunities to spend time and carry out personal or professional business away from the area where you reside, there is likely to be some validity to this quote. However, as has already been shown in this chapter, the social, economic and cultural importance of the rural pub had been contracting in the decades prior to the dominance of the motor vehicle. The 1970s saw a further decline in the number of rural pubs. In the licensing division of Downham Market in the rural county of East Anglia, for example, between 1966 and 1977 16 villages lost a combined total of 27 pubs as Watneys closed them (Sedgley, 1983, cited in Jennings, 2007:214). This was not the only rural area to witness a decline. Figure 4 shows the extent of this decline since 1937 in the villages featured in this research. This, however, only tells part of the story. For example, many of these villages such as Billingham, Helpringham and South Kyme, whilst not completely losing their remaining pubs, have seen one or more go through periods of closure.

**Figure 4: Number of pubs in the villages featured in this research**

Name of Village	Number of pubs 1937	Number of Pubs 1949/50	Number of Pubs 2000	Number of Pubs 2014
Bardney	4	-	-	3
Bicker	3	2	1	1
Billingborough	5	5	2	2 (1 of which is currently up for sale)
Billinghay	6	6	3	2
Burton Pedwardine	1	1	0	0
Donington	8	8	4	2
Folkingham	3	3	2	1
Great Hale	2	2	1	0
Heckington	8	8	2	1
Helpingham	3	2	1	1 (Currently up for sale)
Horbling	1	1	1	1
Keal Cotes	1	1	1	1
Kirby La Thorpe	1	1	1	1
Leasingham	1	1	1	1
Little Hale	1	1	0	0
Metheringham	5	6	4	4
Navenby	4	3	3	2
North Kyme	2	2	1	1
Quadring	6	6	3	1
Ruskington	4	4	3	3
South Kyme	1	1	1	1
Swaton	0	0	0	0
Thorpe Latimer	0	0	0	0
Waddington	3	3	3	3
Wellingore	2	2	2	2

(Compiled from Business Register, 2000; Cryer, 1991; Evans, 2008; Kelly's Directory of Lincolnshire, 1937; Kelly's Directory of Lincoln and Neighbourhood, 1949; Smith, 2006)

The decline in number of rural pubs during period of the late twentieth century, just as in previous centuries, can be linked to wider societal changes. The last quarter of the century continued to see decline in the usage of the pub by young people. Prior to the Second World War many young people were opting to frequent the dance hall and cinema as opposed to the pub (see Jennings, 2007:207). Today they are choosing other activities, namely those associated with the NTE (such as clubbing) and home entertainments (such as television) (the views of some younger research interviewees).

The rise of greater personal mobility, continuing rises in the price of alcohol, the development of the NTE, and more generally changes in leisure entertainment, it can be argued, have all played a part in fuelling the reduced usage of the rural pub by the young. If people are being enticed away from the rural pub then there is naturally going to be an impact on its economic viability, which in turn can affect its long term sustainability especially if there is a failure to stimulate the social importance a pub can create (see chapters 5-8). The development of the NTE, it can be argued, came partly at the expense of the number of both urban and rural pubs. From the mid-1970s onwards national and local authorities began to see commercial benefits in developing and promoting night-time economies; thus they began to encourage, as opposed to discourage, growth in leisure establishments (Hobbs *et al.*, 2003). This eventually led to urban areas housing a large and ever expanding array of on-licence premises like clubs, restaurants and casinos. In the midst of this, however, many pubs (including village pubs) were radically overhauled by their owners or ceased trading altogether (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

Whilst the factors discussed above were contributing to a decline in rural pub numbers and rural pub usage, by the young especially, it can be argued that additional factors were playing a part for previously loyal patrons. By the 1980s over 50 per cent of pubs were owned by the dominant breweries of the time: Allied Breweries, Bass Charrington, Courage, Scottish and Newcastle, Watneys, and Whitbread (Kingsnorth, 2008). The changes that they had brought in, namely the corporate branding, introduction/promotion of keg beer and the shifting of tenants to managers, had not impressed all (Hutt, 1973). Hutt (1973) was not alone in his criticisms of the Big Six breweries some participants for this research, for example, remarked on how the dominant branding and disappearance of the cask ale in the 1970s/80s led to them ‘turning their back’ on their local pub (see chapter 7).



By the late 1980s, the behaviour of the dominant breweries had attracted the attention of the then Conservative Government. In 1989 the Conservative Government, in response to the findings/recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, introduced a new piece of legislation, the 1989 Beer Orders. It was expected that these orders, which limited the number of pubs a brewery could own to 2000 and allowed brewery tenants/managers to sell a 'guest' beer, would lead to pub ownership being more diverse (Everitt and Bowler, 1996; Kingsnorth, 2008; Pratten, 2007c). The impact of these orders, however, was not what had been anticipated by those in favour of them. To get around these orders breweries set up and sold their pubs to PubCos (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). These companies took, and even today retain, control of a high number of pubs in Britain. In 2007, for example, Punch Taverns, Enterprise Inns, and Mitchells & Butlers between them owned approximately 20,000 pubs (Kingsnorth, 2008:30). The behaviour of PubCos has received much media attention and criticism from a variety of sources including pub tenants and pub users. For example, one Hall PubCo tenant, interviewed by Kingsnorth (2008:46) was very critical of the way in which PubCos operate (e.g. high rents, the beer-tie) and makes the assertion that pub tenancy "is a business where you can't make money". It is worth noting that this idea of tenants not being able to gain a sustained income from their pub has, as we have seen with the work of Winstanley (1976), been a recurrent theme. Given this, it is likely that other factors, in addition to PubCo behaviour, impact on the sustainability of the publican's living. The Beer Orders of 1989 did lead to some constructive change. Prior to the orders the dominant six breweries would frequently buy up smaller independent breweries (see Hutt, 1973) but this ceased after their implementation. This can be considered a constructive change especially for pub users. Independent breweries have tended to retain some of the traditional characteristics of pubs. Batemans pubs, for example, have a preference for tenants over managers, they

retail their own cask beer and in some cases retail 'guest' cask beer (Batemans Brewery, 2011). This means that those who frequent Batemans pubs have a varied choice in what they are able to drink.

In recent decades publicans, whether they are tenants or owners, have (as shown in later chapters of this thesis) in an attempt to increase their sustainability, set about reversing the trend of declining pub usage. They have been aided in their quest by changes in licensing laws. In 1988 it became lawful for pubs to continuously open between 11am and 11pm (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004). After 1995 pubs were officially allowed to open throughout the day on Sundays (Pratten, 2007c). These changes meant that they were now able to provide all day food and tailor their entertainment throughout the day to attract a varied clientele. In terms of more liberal licensing laws the twenty first century has continued that of the late twentieth. For example, in late 2005 the 2003 Licensing Act was implemented. This Act was important: not only did it bestow the task of licensing to local authorities but additionally abolished national restrictions on opening hours for drinking establishments (BMA Board of Science, 2008). This meant that pubs that applied and were granted a licence to do so could legally stay open for longer. Although rural pubs were entitled to apply for extended hours, the take up and/or granting of this appears to have been not greatly received. For example, none of the villages where this research took place had extended their opening hours. In the long term this could have consequences for the rural pub. For example, a recent fashion trend has been one of going out later (e.g. 9 or 10 pm and staying out longer (e.g. 1 or 2 am). If the rural pub does not offer the ability to do this then some, especially those of a younger generation, may be deterred from visiting it and that could hinder its economic, social and cultural importance. The main justification given by the then Labour Government for abolishing national restrictions on opening hours was that the spreading out of closing times would reduce, amongst other things, excessive

drinking and drunkenness (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2008b). This is a controversial claim. History (namely the 1830 Beer Act and its consequences) has shown that when liberal measures are implemented there tends to be a rise in alcohol consumption and drunkenness. The 2003 Act did introduce additional provisions to those already mentioned. For example, it gave police forces around the country the authority to suppress establishments which either directly or indirectly encouraged and/or turned a blind eye to disorderly behaviour (Hough *et al.*, 2008). This serves to highlight that amongst the liberal provisions there existed more authoritarian ones. This is seen further with the provision that harsher punishments could be dispensed to establishments caught vending alcohol to underage patrons (*ibid*). This, it can be argued, was a logical and somewhat sensible provision. There is some evidence to suggest that those who start to consume alcohol at a young age are at a greater risk of becoming ‘binge’ drinkers and/or alcohol dependant in later life compared to those who abstain from drinking alcohol until they are in their late teens/early twenties (see Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2007d).

Thus far ambiguity surrounds the effects of the 2003 Licensing Act. Some sources report that following its implementation there was, after 3am, a rise in all types of crime and disorder (Babb, 2007). Conversely others report that it has had little to no impact on these issues (Foster *et al.*, 2007; Hough *et al.*, 2008). There is, however, some concurrence between reports on levels of alcohol consumption. Many, for example, indicate that there has been a slight decline in consumption since the implementation of the Act (see Hough *et al.*, 2008; Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2008). It is, however, controversial to attribute this decline to the Act. In recent times England, like many other countries, has endured a deep economic recession in which there have been rises in unemployment and inflation. The potential knock-on effect of this is that

disposable income, amongst many, will have fallen, resulting in less to spend on non-essential goods such as alcohol.

To sum up, the pub throughout history has endured much change. It has been subject to liberal as well as authoritarian legislation and has experienced the impacts of capitalism. Historically, pubs were frequented by working class men, sold cask beer and were, in general, seen as an important source of drunkenness and disorder. Consequently (with the exception of the 1830 Beer Act), most Acts and policies implemented prior to the second half of the twentieth century were aimed at suppressing the number of pubs and alcohol consumption. Running alongside these changes in regulation there has been a contracting of pub numbers across the country and a decline, over time, in the pub's economic, social and cultural importance. The extent of these contractions has varied from region to region as well as from urban to rural. Although the rural pub saw a decline in its numbers and importance before the twentieth century it was in the years following World War One that its economic importance began to significantly erode. Likewise some of the social activities (e.g. singing) played out in the rural pub before World War One, whilst continuing to be prevalent after the War, were on a much smaller and less frequent scale. From the mid-twentieth century onwards there continued to be a decline in the number of pubs and usage of them especially by the young. These trends as in previous centuries were fuelled by wider societal changes. By the 1980s the dominance of breweries had caught the eye of Westminster, and the Conservative Government of the time, who, in a bid to break up the monopoly, introduced the 1980 Beers Orders. The Breweries sold their pubs to PubCos whose actions and attitudes, just like their predecessors, have continued to be criticised especially by their tenants. The last decade of the twentieth and the first of the twenty-first century saw a more liberal approach to pub opening hours. By the mid-1990s publicans could, for example, have their pubs continually open between 11am

and 11pm on week days and between 11am and 10.30pm on Sundays (Brandwood *et al.*, 2004; Pratten, 2007c). In 2005 national restrictions on pub opening times were abolished meaning publicans could apply for extended opening hours. To date the verdict is still out on the long-term impact of this policy on today's society.

To conclude, the pub, despite being subject to numerous regulations and changes, has survived into the twenty-first century. Furthermore, it continues (as is explicitly shown in later chapters of this thesis) to have an economic, social and cultural importance. That importance, however, is significantly smaller than in previous centuries. In spite of this there remains (as shown in chapters 6 and 7) a fondness in the heart of some individuals towards the pub and its represented social and cultural importance.

## Chapter 5 - Bitter-sweet transformations: Rural enterprises

Commercial services have, for many years, been an integral feature of many rural locations. Post offices, shops, butchers, bakeries, pubs, blacksmiths and garages have often been at the heart of many English villages (Buckton, 2005). As time has elapsed, however, some of these enterprises have faded into the background, whilst others have reinvented themselves in order to remain commercially viable. Rural businesses continue to have an important role to play in helping to maintain and enhance rural communities. This is demonstrated by the following: “The loss of local services not only inconveniences those living in the area, but creates an economic cycle where there is no longer the critical mass of local provision necessary to make up a vibrant local economy” (CPRE, 2006:1). Rural enterprises are a major source of employment in England. According to Hunt (2004:65) “pubs provide around 100,000 rural jobs”. Interviews conducted for this research and the work of Leyshon (2008a) suggest that many of the people who work in village pubs tend to be local to the area and are of younger generations, namely mid to high teens and low to mid-twenties. Furthermore, many invest some of their earnings back into local services such as the village shop. This has positive corollaries: it means that money is continually being circulated and that there is either a steady, or an increase in, local cash flow which helps to ensure that local economies continue to prosper. At this point it has to be acknowledged that not all pub staff are officially recognised as being employed; some work for cash in hand (Hobbs *et al.*, 2000). Although problematic this type of work, especially for young locals, can be seen as being beyond monetary value. For example, this type of part-time and casual work allows for the gaining and development of transferable skills including communication and team building.

The chapter aims to explore and interpret the economic value ascribed to the pub by rural inhabitants. It describes the decline of traditional rural enterprises, with particular reference to the pub, looks at the impact of this decline with reference to local economies and examines the importance of rural enterprises, with particular reference to local economies. In addition it looks at methods being employed by rural enterprises, such as the pub, to try and ensure their economic sustainability.

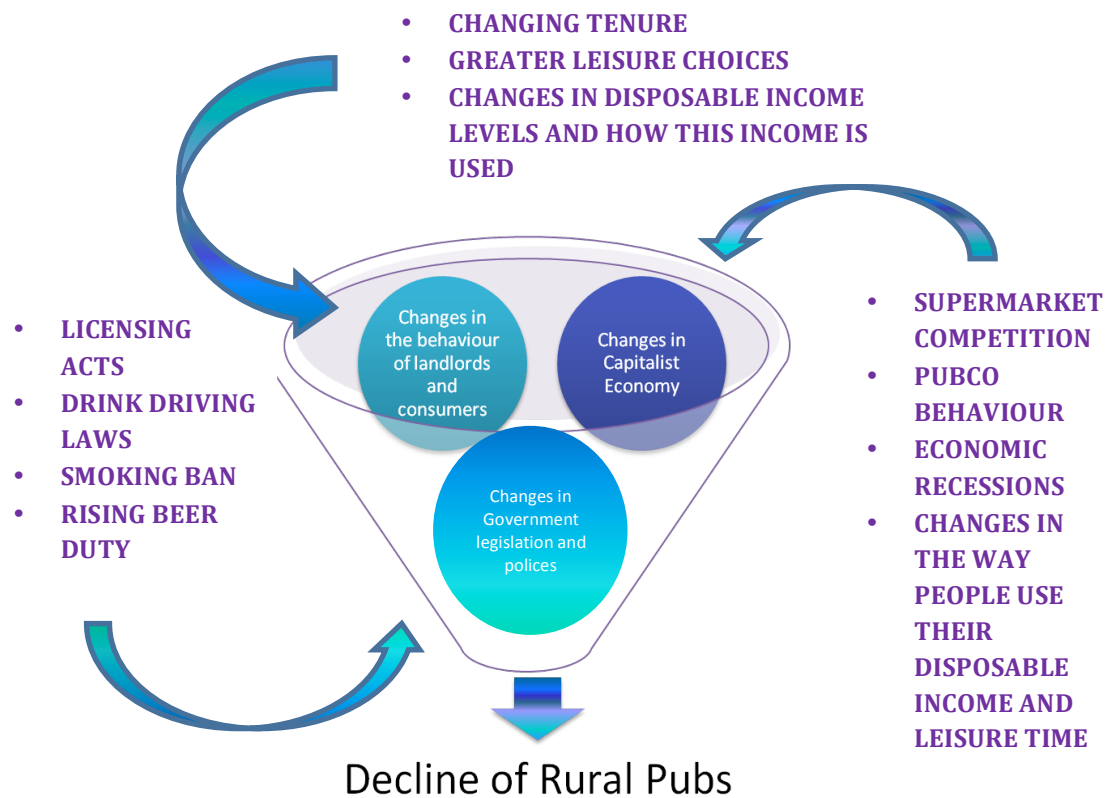
In the mid-twentieth century it was common for villages to house a number of rural enterprises including blacksmiths, butchers, bakeries, post offices, shops, pubs and garages (see Buckton, 2005). Although many villages still retain one or two of these services there has been an evident decline in their number throughout England. Even villages, like Heckington (South Lincolnshire), which continue to be rich in services, have seen a decline in the more traditional services such as pubs, butchers and bakeries. To some extent this is unsurprising. The rise of supermarkets (physical and virtual) which make use of low-cost pricing strategies, combined with greater personal mobility and greater access to the internet, for most, has meant that consumers are able to purchase all their groceries at one destination or have them delivered at a relatively low price. Whilst this has clear benefits for the individual consumer it has some implications for some rural enterprises. Rural enterprises like bakeries and village shops are often unable to compete with the price and convenience of the large supermarkets; consequently they are often unable to remain profitable and have to cease trading (CRC, 2007c). Whilst many traditional rural enterprises have had to contend with the growth of competition and changes in shopping behaviour some, notably the blacksmith, have had to contend with additional factors namely technological advances and changes in the structure of agriculture (see Buckton, 2005; Hunt, 2004).

In recent years the decline in the number of pubs has been the focus of much media attention (see Martin, 2009; Scruton; 2006; The Sunday Times, 2008). In 2010 it

was estimated that 2,028 pubs close annually (BBPA, 2010). In rural areas CAMRA (2012) approximated that rate of closure stood at four per week. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not this is a net figure. For example, whilst a number of pubs do cease trading for good a small proportion close for a period of time then re-market themselves and/or reopen under new management. Although the exact extent can be questioned it is clear that there has been a decline in pubs, particularly village pubs. Furthermore, there is evidence to show that a high proportion of village pubs, once closed, never reopen (Lost Pub Project, 2013). Interviewees, for this research, often remarked on the decline in number of pubs in their village: “My village used to have three pubs but now there is only one, that shows that there has been a decline and it’s not unique to [my village] other villages have seen a decline in the number [of pubs] too. Some villages have lost their one and only pub” (village resident, Quadring, 2010). The open coding process of data analysis highlighted that rural inhabitants attribute this decline to a number of interrelated factors, of which it can be argued there are three types: first, changes in the capitalist economy; second, changes in behaviour of landlords and consumers; and third changes in Government legislation. Under these headings it is possible to identify sub-factors see Figure 5.



**Figure 5 – Interrelated reasons for the decline of the village pub**



Source: expanded and adapted from Markham (2011)

The acceleration of capitalism, namely, the relentless pursuit of profit can be seen as one reason for decline in the number of village pubs. Under this rubric fall the interrelated factors of PubCo behaviour, supermarket competition and notably changes in the way people use their disposable income and leisure time. The ‘beer-tie’ and high rents on some pubs (see chapters 4 and 8) has led some people, notably publicans of particularly PubCo pubs and authors like Kingsnorth (2005, 2008), to be highly critical of PubCos and even argue that they are the principal factor behind the decline in number of all types of pub. As one former publican (Heckington, 2010) remarked: “If you have a fully tied pub you’re at the mercy of the PubCos...”. This sentiment has been echoed by former and current publicans around the country (see Kingsnorth, 2008; Muir, 2009). Such attitudes are not overly surprising. In addition to high rents and the

beer-tie, tenants often have to pay a percentage of their revenue from food sales and gaming machines to their PubCo (Muir, 2009). These types of practices may put PubCo tenants at a slight disadvantage compared to freeholders. For example, unlike freeholders who can choose not only what products to sell but also their price, PubCo tenants are more restricted, with many of their prices being, to an extent, indirectly dictated to by PubCo practices. At this point, it must be acknowledged that a percentage of the rising price of alcohol may be attributable to rising costs relating to raw materials such as grain and wider inflation. Although PubCo behaviour is seen, by the participants of this and other research (e.g. Kingsnorth, 2008), as problematic and putting extra strain on tenants, it is extremely hard to assess, in isolation, the extent to which PubCo practices are affecting the sustainability of village pubs. Muir's (2009) research acknowledges there is little to no evidence available to either support or discredit the theory that PubCo behaviour is negatively impacting on the success of tied pubs.

Profit is a goal of most businesses enterprises, Thus when a gap in the market place presents itself it is often exploited. Supermarkets, it can be argued, have done this with regards to the retailing of alcohol. Supermarkets tend to retail alcohol at a lower price than pubs. Typically a pint of, for example, Carlsberg in a village pub at the start of data collection (2010) would cost in the region of £2.50 - £3.00, now (2013) it stands at approx £3.50-£3.80. In contrast, a well-known supermarket chain was at the start of data collection retailing four cans of Carlsberg 568ml (equivalent to a pint) for £4.69 (Asda, 2011). Although this now stands at a slightly higher price (£5.00, Asda, 2013) the increase has been a fraction of what has occurred in village pubs. Furthermore, there still remains a significant gap, in price, between drink retailed in pubs and drink retailed in supermarkets. It is to be partly expected that alcohol retailed in village pubs will, due to business overhead costs, exceed supermarket prices. However the gap in price is

significant and thus it can be argued that village pubs have to position themselves separately so not to be in direct competition with the supermarkets: “Supermarkets undercut us and therefore make it difficult for us to survive... I can’t compete with them whatever I do but what I can do is try and get customers to visit my pub over the village next door, and to do that I have to sell myself and my pub... with great food, entertainment and friendly staff” (former publican, Horbling, 2010).

Supermarkets often make use of marketing strategies to entice ‘new’ consumers to shop with them, in particular loss leaders. Here some products are retailed at a loss as a method to lure consumers in; once inside it is anticipated that they will purchase other items as well as the loss leader (Black, 2002, cited in Bennetts, 2008). Loss leader products often change. For example, what is a loss leader product in a supermarket one week may not be the next. The practice of using loss leaders, under EU competition law, is not illegal in the United Kingdom, unless it is abused by companies to the extent that it could fall under the rubric of predatory pricing. This is where companies, as a means to try and put their rivals out of business, retail their goods/services at such a low cost that the business, as a whole, is running at a complete loss (Competition Commission, UK, 2008). In the United Kingdom, as in many other countries, allegations of predatory pricing have occurred (see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1999). A report by the Competition Commission, UK, (2008:9) shows that whilst a high proportion of supermarkets engage in below cost pricing and make use of loss leaders they use them in a way which promotes and stimulates healthy competition between retailers rather than being predatory towards one another.

In addition to loss leaders, some supermarkets often make use of intensive advertisement. With regards to the drinks trade a high percentage of advertisement comes from the supermarkets (Pratten and Scoffield, 2007), who often use alcohol as a

loss leader. On the whole, loss leader campaigns, whether or not accompanied by intense advertisement, have economic benefits for the chain concerned, the consumer and the economy. For example, it means consumers are able to make their disposable income go further, meaning they can spend money on other ventures, thus helping to ensure economic growth. In regard to alcohol, however, there are many arguments against it being used as a loss leader<sup>10</sup>. In general those involved in the drinks and pub trade, namely publicans and Campaign groups such as CAMRA argue that supermarket pricing is to the economic detriment of the village pub. It is hard to accurately assess, in isolation, the impact of supermarket competition. CAMRA representatives often campaign for an investigation into minimum alcohol pricing as a means to reduce supermarket domination (CAMRA representative, 2010). Minimum pricing is presently a topical issue in Westminster and British media (see, for example, Alcohol Policy, 2012; Alcohol Policy, 2013; Mail Online, 2013; Wintour, 2013). Some politicians, such as David Cameron, have publicly supported this measure but as a means to reduce alcohol related harms (BBC News Online, 2013).

To gain a full picture of how supermarket competition affects the economic sustainability of village pubs investigations, such as those proposed by the CAMRA representative (2010), are vital because whilst price may be one factor contributing to where and what consumers drink, there are likely to be other factors including changes in leisure pursuits.

Capitalism thrives on exploiting opportunities that exist in the market place, for example arising from changing patterns of consumer expenditure and use of leisure time in recent decades (Bianchini, 1995; Gershuny, 2002). By using strategies such as ‘happy hours’, the marketing of ‘home entertainment’ as a real alternative to going out, and the promises of excitement and memories, capitalism has influenced how consumers use

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<sup>10</sup> There are also social and health arguments as to why alcohol should not be used as a loss leader. However due to the nature of this chapter the focus will be on economic arguments.

their leisure time and spend their disposable income. 'Happy hours' in pubs can be seen as one of the first strategies used. This strategy did occur in some village pubs although it was more prominent in larger economies of scale. 'Happy hours' took place at pre-determined times and enabled consumers to get more for their money. They, it can be argued, were a form of a loss leader strategy; however they also influenced the way consumers made use of their leisure time. For example, by setting a pre-determined time they influenced people to be at a pub at a specific time, often earlier than they would have done if 'happy hour' was not running. According to Worpole (1992) the introduction of the 'happy hour' was a commercial strategy that was highly successful in altering a consumer's outlook and usage of their leisure time.

The marketing of 'home entertainment' as an alternative to going out and the promises of excitement and memories are two factors that may have contributed to falling trade and decline in the number of village pubs. In recent years there has been an influx of home entertainment facilities such as DVD /Blue Ray players, games consoles and super-fast broadband. These, combined with the ability to purchase inexpensive alcohol and takeaways, have led to many consumers opting to organise nights in rather than nights out (Muir, 2009; Preece *et al.*, 1999, cited in Pratten and Lovatt, 2002). Running parallel to this there has also been a rise in alternative leisure pursuits/amenities (Pratten and Lovatt, 2002). Overall it can be argued that village pubs are 'missing out' when it comes to marketing consumer experience. For example, whilst there are examples of village pubs marketing the experience they can provide to the consumer (see The Village Pub, 2013), the majority do not. Many village pubs are, as shown in chapter 7 rich in local and sometimes national history and heritage. By capitalising on this, more village pubs could market themselves as providing consumers the ability to consume a heritage experience where knowledge can be gained and memories can be made (see chapter 8).

Government legislation, namely the drink drive laws, the smoking ban and rising beer taxation, are other factors which are seen as reasons for the decline in the number of village pubs. A number of interviewees, in this research, passed judgment on the impact of drink-drive legislation; approximately 5 expressed the idea that village pub trade, as a consequence of the enforcement of drink-drive laws, has contracted to those who are able to walk to the establishment. Reality is seldom as simple as this, however. Whilst Pratten and Lovatt (2002) assert that drink-drive legislation is naturally going to have an impact on the amount of trade a village pub receives it can be argued that other personal factors also play a part. A finding that emerged during the course of open coding was that many go to the village pub for a meal not just a drink. This combined with the deep economic recession that has taken place over recent years may have led many consumers to be more selective as to when and where they spend their disposable income. This may help to explain why village pubs that are renowned for their food are thriving while others are struggling.

The impact of the smoking ban on the economic sustainability of the pub is an issue on which opinion is divided. Whilst some, (approximately 6), interviewees adopted the view that the smoking ban had led to falling trade in their local, others believe it has led to a shift and subsequent increase in families frequenting village pubs. Unfortunately, thus far, there has been little research conducted on the impact of the smoking ban with particular reference to the pub; consequently, it is difficult to assess such suggestions. Rising beer duty is also a contentious issue. Evidence suggests that when alcohol taxes are raised alcohol consumption declines (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2008a). This has led some, namely public health advocates (see Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2008a), to campaign for further rises in beer duty and others, namely publicans and campaign groups such as CAMRA, to campaign for a freezing of beer duty. When alcohol consumption declines an inevitable knock-on effect is going to be a

fall in alcohol revenue, thus it can be argued that village pubs can be put under pressure when beer duty is raised. It may be possible to further argue that some village pubs such as those which have not diversified feel the pressure more than those which have. For example, when a village pub diversifies alcohol only forms a percentage of its overall revenue and thus beer duty for these pubs may be seen as minor rather than a major factor affecting their economic viability.

During its lifetime a village pub can undergo much change, ranging from its appearance through to the amenities it provides. Whilst change is not necessarily a bad thing it can sometimes have implications for the economic sustainability of village pubs. Whilst many changes that occur in pubs are to the benefit of the consumer, to encourage them to spend more money, the constant changing of landlords can, in some instances, have a negative impact on customer numbers, trade and revenue levels. As one Great Hale village resident (2010), remarked: “There becomes a lack of consistency when pubs continually change hands, it can unnerve some, particularly elderly, regulars and make them feel as if they no longer want to visit and support their local”. On the surface the constant changing of landlords may seem a trivial factor; however, on reflection it might shed some light why some village pubs are struggling to be economically viable. Different people have different ideas. If a village pub becomes established as a place which is welcoming, friendly and serves good food and then the landlord and the overall atmosphere of the place changes, consumers may not continue to frequent it. It can be difficult to change consumer behaviour once it has been established. Individuals often become accustomed to a particular setting and what it provides. In many instances change in or to village pubs is not received warmly: “When our local changed hands the atmosphere went from serene and friendly to loud and standoffish... there became an emphasis on showing every football match going and drawing in a younger crowd. I and a good few others stopped going. Needless to say,

once the football season stopped the pub suffered... There was no way I was going back there, I had found myself another friendly local. Good job too as my old local is now closed, not surprising really” (village resident, Great Hale, 2012). This quote shows that once the reputation of a business has either been lost or damaged, it can be hard to get back. The potential repercussion of fewer consumers is less revenue being created, possibly leading to a pub which is not economically viable.

It is possible to argue that there may be several factors behind the turnover of landlords, including long arduous days for little reward and inexperienced publicans. The prospect of running a village pub can, at least superficially, seem attractive. In many television dramas running a village pub is seen as an occupation which offers merriment, the chance to socialise and reap financial reward. The reality can be quite different. As one publican remarked, being a landlord is stressful, you don’t get much time to yourself and you don’t always make that much money: “Sometimes it is easier to throw in the towel” (former Publican, Horbling, 2010). Some participants like the representative from CAMRA (2010) see PubCo behaviour, namely the recruitment of inexperienced tenants and poor pastoral support, as being partially responsible for the constant turnover of staff in some pubs. These types of practices may well have implications. If someone does not know how to run a village pub and they are offered no guidance in doing so, then they can become overwhelmed and struggle financially resulting in them having to exit the pub trade.

As the case study located below highlights, the important things when changing landlords are ensuring that first, the right tenant is matched to the right pub and second, the transition from one landlord to the next is a smooth process. This case study also highlights that even with consistency, financial and pastoral support not all village pubs can be economically viable. This is not altogether surprising, as in previous decades some village pubs were run principally as a social rather than profit making venture:



“When me father had a village pub back in the 1920’s and 30’s he treated it as a hobby rather than a way to make a living. He had his day job [land drainage worker] but would serve pints in the evenings often to friends and work colleagues. His pub, alongside his family, was his pride and joy... Looking back he probably didn’t break even every week but I don’t think he cared” (village resident, Great Hale, 2010).

#### Case Study – Batemans

In Lincolnshire, Batemans is an established brewery which is well known, at least in name, to many Lincolnshire residents. Located in Wainfleet, Lincolnshire, and established in 1874, Batemans has had an eventful and somewhat turbulent history (see Andrews, 1995; Batemans, 2013) but it remains to this day. Furthermore, a number of village pubs throughout Lincolnshire continued to be tied to this brewery: “We make a point of trying to retain our village pubs. This isn’t always easy and there are odd times when you have to say enough is enough but, hand on heart I can honestly say this is a rarity” (Batemans representative, 2013). By the late 1950s, Batemans had over 70 pubs in Lincolnshire and were expanding (Batemans, 2013). However, this came at the expense of some of their village pubs. In order to not only purchase and thus expand the number of pubs they owned but also increase their profit margins Batemans did two things. Firstly, they sold their pre-existing de-licensed pubs. Secondly, in order to ensure their more profitable pubs had a full licence, they closed their least profitable pubs (many of which had a full licence) and transferred the licence to existing, and in their eyes profitable, partial licence pubs (Andrews, 1995). Whilst these measures led to some villages losing their pub, in others they may have helped lay the foundations for the sustainability of the village local. The redistribution of a full license to an already profitable partial licence pub could serve to strengthen the commercial viability of that enterprise. For example, being able to have extra trading days or hours, in theory, may

contribute to more customers (who previously wanted to frequent but could not due to the limited trading hours) frequenting. Furthermore, it may lead to consumers frequenting earlier and/or staying longer potentially resulting, if they spend more, in extra revenue. In practice, however, it has to be recognised that these scenarios might not occur and if they do it may not be the same across the board. The success of a business rests on a number of often interrelated and fluid demographic, economic, social and cultural factors, which vary from region to region and settlement to settlement. Thus what is needed to ensure the sustainability of one pub may not be the same for another.

The closure of some village pubs can sometimes be inevitable. For example, in spite of guidance and support, some village pubs whilst having a high social return have not seen this transpire into economic return. This was the case for one of the former publicans interviewed as part of this research who noted that whilst he was rich in social profit neither he nor Batemans (the pub owners) made a lot of financial profit. This was despite the introduction of diversification methods like the selling food, and pastoral as well as financial support from Batemans (former publican, Helpringham, 2010). The reasons for a high social but low economic return in village pubs could be many and varied. One possible suggestion to arise from this research is the notion that the consumption of drink has only ever formed part of the pub experience for many pub goers. Consequently, those who frequent for the social side of the experience may consume a low level of produce resulting in low takings for the landlord at the end of the night. Given that traditionally many village pubs did not offer any other aides to ease socialisation, namely meals, it is to be partly expected that social profit would outstrip economic profit: “For me the best part of going to the pub was meeting with Joey and the rest of my pals, sometimes a pint would last me all night... drink really

didn't matter, it was the atmosphere and being with friends that made it special" (village resident, Heckington, 2011).

When village pubs close there are always going to be some 'casualties'. It can, however, be argued that whilst independent breweries such as Batemans are sometimes 'forced' to close village pubs it can have repercussions for them and is not always in the best interests of the company image: "We are a small brewery: in the grand scheme of things, we only own a handful of pubs, it is in our interests to look after them and those who run them. If we have to close one of our pubs then our image can be dented which is not good for our sustainability..." (Batemans representative, 2013). This participant went on to ascribe importance to tenant and pub compatibility for the sustainability of village pubs. For example, there were repeated claims, made throughout the interview, that whilst it can sometimes be difficult to find the right tenant for the right pub and ensure the smooth transition of tenants it is a vital process in helping a pub's economic viability.

This case study raises some important points including possible reasons as to why small independent breweries like Batemans are, to some degree, protective of their village pubs. It could be argued that they are being paternalistic for the good will of their tenants and the communities they serve but they are probably more self-centred than this, being most concerned with their own profit margins and sustainability. Small breweries, such as Bateman's, often have a 'brand identity' and aspire to continuously protect this (see Andrews, 1995). Batemans, like many small independent breweries, is a regional brewery. A large proportion of its trade and revenue comes from Lincolnshire where its 'brand' is already established and consumer loyalty built up. Consequently, they are unlikely to exercise measures, including closing village pubs, which could jeopardise consumer loyalty and put their 'brand image' at risk. Brand image can be

hard to build up but easy to tarnish and once tarnished it can be hard to re-build. There are several examples which could be drawn on to highlight this point including Findus and the recent horsemeat scandal (see Neville, 2013). Without loyal consumers smaller local and independent breweries might be at a higher risk from external factors.

When a rural enterprise such as the village shop or the pub ceases to trade there can be far reaching implications for individuals, rural communities and local economies<sup>11</sup>. It can be argued that when one rural commercial service ceases to trade a ripple effect can follow. Some rural enterprises rely heavily on other local commercial services to minimise cost, maximize profit and ultimately survive (see Markham, 2012). A high percentage of small rural businesses, for example, make use of local post offices; if these close then those businesses either have to travel further afield or relocate to another area (CPRE, 2006). Although this chapter, thus far, has focused on the decline of some rural enterprises notably the village pub, it is imperative to recognise that in general rural areas contribute considerably to the national economy and many rural economies are flourishing – albeit some more than others (Burgess, 2008). The continuation of traditional rural enterprises and the introduction of ‘new’ ones are, without doubt, invaluable to the continuation of a thriving UK rural economy. In addition to providing employment they facilitate tourism and aid rural regeneration, generating additional economic activity and helping to strengthen local economies.

There have been some changes to the UK rural economy in recent decades. Notably there has been shift towards an economy based on industries such as tourism, hospitality, leisure and recreation rather than on industries which exploit the natural environment; such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fishing and mining (Slee, 2005; Winter and Rushbrook, 2003). This shift can, in part, be attributed to changes in the global and national capitalist economy and subsequent demographic changes that this

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<sup>11</sup> In this chapter attention will be paid to the implications for local economies. The implications for individuals and rural communities will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

has brought to many rural settlements. Over the last few decades, often driven by consumption, (including employment opportunities), there has been an increasing aspiration amongst many to visit or inhabit rural settlements resulting in a migration of people from the urban to the rural (Bosworth, 2010; Woods, 2005). This driving force of consumption has resulted in some villages such as the examples provided by Slee (2005) developing and expanding their services of consumption, namely pub-restaurants, craft shops and recreational activities such as organised shoots, to further draw residents and tourists who in turn consume the products being offered to them. Those who are new to village settlements have also aided the shift that is occurring in the rural economy. Research has indicated that in some locations not only are new village residents the driving force behind many of the consumption based rural enterprises but that in a high proportion of cases they are (at least on a business level) connecting with some of their community by employing local people and carrying out commercial transactions with other local businesses (Defra Rural Economics Unit, 2008; Bosworth, 2010) (see Markham, 2012).

Whilst the rural economy is, in general, moving towards industries such as tourism, hospitality, leisure and recreation, different areas are at different stages in the process. Agriculture, for example, is still at the heart of some localities such as the Fen lands in East Anglia (Defra Rural Economics Unit, 2008). With regards to Lincolnshire, it can be argued that, although there is some movement towards a tourist and hospitality economy, the county's flat land and soil quality means agriculture continues to play a key role (Lincolnshire Research Observatory, 2009). Different parts of Lincolnshire, however, have different characteristics and identities with regards to the economy. There is, for example, private sector growth and unexploited potential around the A1 corridor, whilst the fen lands of the county are renowned for food and horticulture (Lincolnshire County Council, 2007). One of the growth areas of the Lincolnshire

economy has been the tourist industry. In 2009 this industry was worth approximately £971 million up by £13 million compared to 2008 when it stood at approximately £958 million (East Midlands Tourism, 2010a). A large proportion of the 2009 revenue, approximately £173 million (18%), was generated from expenditure on food and drink including from pubs (East Midlands Tourism, 2010b). The vast majority of village pubs, in Lincolnshire, retail food; many have marketed themselves as using only the finest county produced produce. In doing this they have acted as a magnet. Visitors are not only able to enjoy a meal out but are also able to sample county grown and reared produce. It can be proposed that, in some locations, the pub has even become identified with the village it is housed in. Some pubs, such as ‘The Queens Head at Kirby La Thorpe,’ are as renowned as the village and vice versa. It can even be argued that, in some instances, it is the pub and its reputation for good quality food and drink which puts the village on the tourist radar. Given this, it would be erroneous to underestimate the importance of the food and drink industry in helping to sustain rural economies.

Rural enterprises, often as a means to remain economically sustainable, make use of economic diversification, and this has been particularly the case with the village pub. Some village pubs have diversified only into the selling of food, whilst others have taken a more novel approach. The remainder of this chapter will examine some of the approaches taken by village pubs to try and ensure their economic sustainability; in doing this it will also detail the importance of the village pub and other rural enterprises in facilitating rural tourism and aiding rural regeneration.<sup>12</sup>

The diversification into the selling of food has been one of the most popular methods adopted by publicans as a means to remain economically sustainable. After World War Two, pubs typically concentrated on the selling of beverages, and peripheral to this was the selling of bar snacks, namely peanuts and crisps. However, in the last

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<sup>12</sup> Diversification measures are also discussed in subsequent chapters, especially chapter 6 where social diversification is discussed, and chapter 8 where all three types of diversification (economic, social and cultural) are discussed. In this chapter attention is paid principally to economic diversification.

couple of decades, the selling of food has become the main area of concentration (see Your Village Lincs, 2010 October Edition). Many village pubs, in an attempt to attract more clientele, have marketed themselves as pubs that use locally sourced produce. As one publican put it: “Locally grown food attracts people; by serving local food I’m hopefully making my pub stand out and drawing in more customers” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). By sourcing their produce locally, village pubs are being seen, by rural inhabitants, to be trading with other local businesses and helping to facilitate service survival. Given this, it is not surprising that many interviewees, for this research, articulated that the closure of a village pub negatively impacts upon other rural enterprises and the prosperity of the local economy. This transformation into the selling of food can be seen as being inevitable.

As times change so too do people’s attitudes, tastes and lifestyles, and village pubs like any other business need to be mindful of this. In recent times the concept of eating out has become fashionable; it provides an opportunity for individuals to spend quality time together outside the confines of the home or the work place. By offering good quality food pubs are able to capitalise on this and broaden their appeal: “It is good food and the chance to spend time with my family that entices me to a village pub not the alcohol” (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). Once village pubs have made the transition into selling food the opportunities for increased revenue can be immense. If a village pub gains a good reputation for its food then individuals are not only likely to come again but also recommend it to family and friends, resulting in increased trade (Your Village Lincs, 2010 October Edition). Some village pubs have taken the selling of food to the next level and introduced take away food as well as eating on the premises (see Pratten and Lovatt, 2002). This can increase revenue further; by offering take away food, village pubs are able to cater to those who want good quality food, without the hassle of preparation, in the comfort of their own home. Fewer village pubs

that provide food are going out of business than those that concentrate on the selling of drink (Sleaford Standard, 2009). Thus, the selling of food could be a means to help ensure village pubs remain economically viable and sustainable.

Throughout the country some village pubs have adopted other approaches as a means to increase customer numbers and profit turnover. One of these methods has been the provision of overnight accommodation. Another has been the locating of namely, but not exclusively, the village post office and/or shop in the grounds or vicinity of the village pub (see The Countryside Agency, 2001). These methods can have immense consequences for rural communities, the individual pub and the local economy<sup>13</sup>. By locating an additional service into their grounds or vicinity village pubs are able to acquire additional sources of income, in a number of ways. First, if a sub-post master or village grocer sets up business in the pub then the publican may receive rent and/or a percentage of the profit. Second, if it is the publican who takes on the role of grocer then they are provided with a ‘new’ source of income. Third, there is the possibility to cross-sell, whereby the consumer goes in with the purpose of buying a specific product but ends up frequenting the village pub for a drink or a meal, thus utilising both businesses resulting in increased trade and revenue for the pub (see *ibid*). When a service is located in the grounds or vicinity of another service there are wide-ranging benefits for local economies. For example, there can be additional employment opportunities as well as an increase in cash flow which can help generate further economic activity. Increased tourism can be an additional benefit to local economies. Many people, before visiting an area, research what it has to offer. If they are alerted to a village pub which has a good reputation or a unique selling point then they may be more likely to visit that area and make use of its services, thus helping the local

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<sup>13</sup> See footnote 11



economy and contributing to the sustainability of local businesses (developed from Markham, 2012).

It is estimated that approximately £8 billion is spent annually by those who frequent rural areas for a day trip (Rural White Paper, 2000). It can be argued that a considerable percentage of this is consumed in village pubs, especially those which offer something special. Village pubs, such as the one in Helpringham, South Lincolnshire, which organise distinctive events such as bungee jumps and celebrity appearances (principally aimed at drawing in more locals) can sometimes reap substantial financial benefits, facilitate tourism and propel an area's local economy. One example of this can be seen with the Jack Russell Inn, a village pub located in Devon. Here the publicans took advantage of the historical legend that the village was the first place to breed Jack Russell terriers (Countryside Agency, 2001). By exploiting this legend, combined with the introduction of 'new' facilities and the provision of good food, they have seen an increase in the amount of tourist trade they receive and the profit they generate (ibid). This highlights the interplay between the different types of value – economic, social and cultural - and shows that their interdependency can be important in a pub's sustainability. Whilst increases in tourist trade can be good for the pub itself as they contribute to its financial viability, it is also good for the local economy. When an area is thriving and enterprises like the pub are doing well, new businesses can be attracted to it thus aiding rural regeneration and the sustainability of the local economy (see Rural White Paper, 2000).

Village pubs (or in some cases the lack of them in a specific area) can contribute towards the identification and starting up of a new rural enterprise. Pubs are places where, *inter alia*, business networks can be established and partnerships formed; as Cabras and Reggiani (2010) acknowledge, entrepreneurial ideas can often be identified by friends/acquaintances over a drink in a pub. Whilst many of the ideas discussed or

initiated in these instances may come to nothing, a select few may come to fruition, thus aiding rural regeneration and enhancing the local economy. Furthermore, in some settlements such as Collingham the village pub, by encouraging business networking as a result of hosting the monthly business club, is actively promoting and encouraging local economy development, growth and regeneration (see Collingham Website, 2013). Village pubs have always played a role in helping to facilitate the development of other local business people leading to enhanced local economic growth. However, unlike the example shown above it has traditionally been more subtle and indirect: “You could always count on the pub [and its customers] when you needed to find a good, local tradesman... I’ve found plasterers, builders and electricians, [through asking in my local]” (village resident, Navenby, 2011).

On occasions the lack of a village pub can provide the foundations for and propelling of a new rural enterprise. For example, the village of Swaton in South Lincolnshire does not have a pub but in recent years has seen the introduction and expansion of a brewery store. This enterprise started out by brewing and selling beer, but has now expanded and houses a coffee shop. As one Swaton village resident (2010) remarked: “Until the introduction of the brewery store the village was dead but now it gets some tourists... sometimes coaches stop here on their way to their destination. This brewery store, in my mind, is great for the local economy...”. In early 2013 this microbrewery ceased trading, its future is currently uncertain. It is hard to assess the impact of this closure as it has only recently occurred. However, given the microbrewery’s positive role in the village and village community it can be argued that its closure is likely to have far reaching repercussions

To sum up, rural enterprises have been at the heart of many villages and the rural economy for a number of years. Over the course of time, however, there has been an evident decline in more traditional enterprises such as the village blacksmith and

village bakeries. The village pub has too been in decline in terms of numbers. There are many interrelated factors behind this decline, which fall into three types. First, changes in capitalism; second, changes in Government legislation; and third, changes in the behaviour of landlords and consumers. When rural enterprises cease there are implications, particularly for other businesses which rely on the trade of a particular enterprise to survive. Local economies can also suffer; unemployment can increase, meaning consumers have less disposable income to spend on goods leading to less cash being circulated in the local economy. Although there has been a decline in some traditional rural enterprises, some are fighting back. Village pubs, to try and ensure economic viability and sustainability, have often made use of economic diversification. Some have concentrated on the selling of good quality food, whilst others have taken a more novel approach. From this chapter it can be concluded that rural enterprises such as the pub have been seen as economically important by rural inhabitants because they provide employment, help stimulate the growth of other local businesses, and facilitate tourism. In short they help ensure that local economies prosper.

## Chapter 6: The village public house: A social hub

One of the main ways in which the pub has been depicted by dramas and literature is as a place which embodies friendliness and social interaction. These portrayals often show individuals engaging in positive communication exchanges with a variety of differing individuals ranging from pre-established friendships through to unfamiliar faces. Running parallel to this imagery there has been another image, one of negativity. The pub has been and continues to be associated with inebriation, anti-social behaviour and the breakdown of personal relationships. Both images existed, albeit in different guises, ever since the birth of social drinking establishments many centuries ago (Jennings, 2007; Nicholls, 2009). Consequently, pubs have long endured both positive and negative comments by a variety of sources including Westminster politicians and the British press. Alcohol related policies are different at different times. Sometimes they reflect the positive view of the pub (enhancement of social interaction and social networks), and at other times the negative view (public inebriation, rowdiness, brawling and fighting). Furthermore, in some instances they reflect both views at the same time. This chapter is written at a time when much debate focuses on the long-term decline in the number of, especially village, pubs and on how that decline can be halted. At the same time, however, debates continue over issues pertaining to alcohol and its consumption; notably ‘binge’ drinking, alcohol pricing and licensing laws. The overriding goal of this chapter is to examine the social importance ascribed, by rural inhabitants, to the village pub. In doing this, it explores how the pub has traditionally fitted into village life and whether this has altered over time before going on to examine what the decline in number means for individuals and rural communities. Additionally, it discusses the extent to which the village pub can help form, strengthen and sustain social networks (individual and community). There is also some discussion

of the social divisions that occur in the village pub and how different resident groups (i.e. long-standing and newcomers) perceive the social role of the village pub. Throughout this chapter case study examples will be used to illustrate and reinforce key findings.

Wilby (2008), writing in the *New Statesman*, argued that: “pubs once had an important socialising influence, particularly among the working classes. They were the only places, apart from churches, where teenagers and pensioners rubbed along together”. From this it becomes possible to deduce two important points. First, the pub is more than a commercial business; and second, there has been some media recognition that, over time, the pub has seen a decline in its social importance. Although Wilby (2008) is promoting recognition on one hand he is also disregarding the fact that the pub has typically been a male domain. For example, nowhere in his article does Wilby (2008) acknowledge that women have often been excluded from pub spaces. Rural inhabitants, interviewed as part of this research, in contrast to Wilby (2008), did recognise this: “When I was growing up it was only men who went to pubs, they would go there to socialise with work colleagues and friends of all ages” (village resident, Ruskington, 2010). Approximately 30 interviewees (men and women) expressed similar sentiments to this. Although some respondents were in receipt of the idea that the village pub has historically been a male space many held the belief that this was no longer the case. For example, the comparison of data from male and female interviewees highlighted that both genders saw the contemporary pub as an inclusionary village hub for men, women, couples, and families at any time of the day and any day of the week. The reality, however, as shown in chapter 3 and in the work of Leyshon (2005, 2008a, 2008b) continues to be different to this, with men continuing to dominate village pub spaces and women being marginalised.

This concept of the pub being the hub of the village is one that warrants some discussion. Although sources such as Buckton (2005) talk about the village pub as being a hub they rarely expand on what they mean by this. In many instances they are alluding to it being one of the core social centres of the village. However, it can be described as being a multi-dimensional hub: economic, social and cultural. In this chapter, when the pub is discussed as a hub, it will be referring specifically to the social dimension. The pub as a social hub is one which dates back to the times of alehouses, taverns and inns. The alehouse, in particular, was renowned for communal gatherings (Nicholls, 2009). During the sixteenth century there was concern by those in authority that the social nature, of drinking establishments, was contributing to increases in public drunkenness, disorder and political dissent and that these negatives would lead to a breakdown of societal morals and values (Nicholls, 2009). As a means of preventing and controlling these fears, those in authority justified the implementation of licensing legislation – the 1552 Licensing Act (ibid). The reasons given for the implementation of this Act can be described as being to a degree ‘smoke and mirrors’. In Tudor England, there were only three main outlets for an individual’s money: buying land, hiring servants, and buying beer. The majority of individuals in rural England participated in the labour market only to earn their ‘beer’ money (Nicholls, 2009:10). It is this phenomenon that the legislation was partly implemented to halt. Those in authority held the view that the atmosphere of alehouses caused people to over drink and socialise and as a consequence exacerbated society’s laziness. They advocated that alehouses needed to be subject to strict control in order to limit their manipulation of leisure time and to ensure idleness did not become the ‘norm’ (ibid). It is unreasonable, however, to attribute such tendencies to alehouses. Individuals are responsible for their own decisions, including that of spending their disposable income and leisure time socialising in drinking establishments. It is, highly probable that the fears of those in authority were, to some

degree, unfounded. Throughout history, there have been what Stanley Cohen called ‘moral panics’. These are when an object, establishment, or person/s “emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests...” (Cohen, 1979:9). In contemporary society there are many examples of this, including ‘the lager lout’ perceived as a threat in the 1980s/1990s and ‘binge drinking’ more recently. With both of these it is possible to argue that the fears were disproportionate to the actual threat posed. This is not to say that alcohol consumption, particularly if in excess, does not have implications for the individual and society as a whole but often the reality stands somewhat different from the reporting’s by the media.

It has been long established and disseminated by a variety of sources, including the media, that pubs have the capacity to bring people together, thus helping to create and maintain social networks. This has especially been the case in rural localities such as Lincolnshire where, because of the dispersed rural population, social interaction has often been difficult. Many male long-standing village residents who participated in this research explicitly stated that, because of village services, like the pub and shop, they were able to carve out and maintain a social life. Some of these interviewees went on to imply that they perceived that their social lives would be less fulfilled had village services not been in existence: “My local is my place... I get to meet friends and make new ones... over the years I have made lots of friends in the pub. To me it is more than a watering hole - it’s my window to the outside world. Without it I wouldn’t have a social life, I would be stuck in the same four walls day in day out... I would be existing, but not living” (village resident, Navenby, 2010). The interviewee delivered this statement with passion and provided a powerful indication of how important the village pub is to them. Naturally, different people have different experiences of the village pub and this is reflected in their perceptions and experiences. Even when talking to a

participant, it has to be recognised that they are telling their own stories and that listening to their stories is only the first step in grounded theory research.

Furthermore, as story listeners it is only possible gain threads of what the village pub means to participants. This can be as a result of several factors. First, participants may have many stories and recollections but may not want to discuss all of them. Second, external factors may dictate that the stories being disseminated are adapted to portray what the respondent wants to believe or wants the listener to hear. Third, a group of people can be sat around a table in the village pub but, if they came in at different times and by different character sequences, they could leave with very different experiences and stories. For example, a group of five people were sat around a table in one village pub; three of the group arrived and sat down together. An hour or so later this group (of three) was joined by two other people (group of five). Shortly after, one of the people from the first group of three went home. Depending on when and where people joined or left this table the stories they recollected and the feelings they had might be entirely different.

The metaphor of ‘Tamara’ is a particularly useful concept to highlight that a story listener is only able to gain a small insight into how people view and experience the interactions that occur within the village pub. In the play *Tamara*, the audience gets to elect which character they want to follow. This is fluid, for example, if an audience member is following the maid but then she meets the butler, the audience member has to make a decision, continue to follow the maid’s story or move to the butler’s (Boje, 1995). The point to be made is that it is impossible for the audience member to follow both characters because their stories are happening simultaneously. Consequently, the audience who stayed with the maid will have experienced a different set of stories compared to those who followed the butler (ibid). As with ‘Tamara’, neither the village pub nor people’s experiences of it can be understood on the basis of one visit or



interview (ibid). The interpretive exchange which occurs between the story teller and the story listener is one which is fluid; in grounded theory the purpose of the interview is to gain understanding of the phenomena being studied “from the perspective and in the context of those who experience it” (Birks and Mills, 2011:16). All the participants for this thesis told their story of the village pub; it is their construction from their world. The analytical processes (e.g. sensitising and theorising through coding and constant comparison) applied to this data revealed that participants are not just relating stories but rather using them to ‘enact’ an account of ‘village life’ and the role the village pub plays in that life/lifestyle (Browning, 1991, in Boje, 1995).

Time and time again references were made to the ease with which friendships could be made and maintained as a result of continuing village services: “The pub and shop provide me and my friends a place to meet, mingle and treat one another; we can go out for a walk and then enjoy a pint or two at the pub or an ice cream from the shop” (village resident, Heckington, 2010). Should one party fail to partake or if the ability for this type of symbolic reciprocal exchange alters then personal social networks can be affected: “One of the highlights of my week, up until it closed, was meeting my friend in our local, we would play pool and generally chit chat, I would buy him a pint and vice versa” (village resident, Great Hale, 2010). This resident went on to explain that when his local closed, he continued to meet with friends and share drinks at theirs and his abode. However, he described this as being more sporadic and more imposing, and felt that the exchanges that occurred were forced and unbalanced towards the host rather than naturally flowing as they did in the pub (ibid). This highlights just how important the village pub can be to some people’s personal networks. At the core of many personal networks lies reciprocal exchange, and the pub by its very nature serves to facilitate this. The buying of drinks for others, for example, is a well-known practice and a rather natural gesture for some people in the pub (see Heley, 2008). Research by

Hunt and Satterlee (1986a) suggests that the village pub and what it can facilitate enables a strengthening of existing personal relationships and additionally allows for the easy creation of others. Many of the concepts to emerge from selective coding echo what Hunt and Satterlee (1986a) state but also suggest that this social importance can extend beyond a pub's regular users. The emotion portrayed by some participants at the loss of their village pub was immensely powerful. It is not until you speak to those who rely on local services that you realise just how detrimental the decline in number is. One participant said: "I care about my neighbours and the people in my community. If they become isolated and withdrawn, like some of them did when our local (pub) shut, it's upsetting... it's hard not to let it impact on your own lives" (village resident, Leasingham, 2010). The following case study draws together many of the points made in this and preceding paragraphs and in doing so serves to highlight the importance the village pub can have in relation to personal social networks.

#### Case Study - Helpringham

Helpringham is a village located in South Lincolnshire, in 2011 it had an adult population of approximately 765 (North Kesteven District Council, 2011). This village, in the 1960s, boasted many traditional rural services including, two pubs, several village shops (one of which housed the post office), a garage, a butchers, a bakery, a hardware store and a forge (Helpringham History Society, 2012). Over the course of the last few decades many of these services have disappeared. For example, one of the pubs, 'The Willoughby De Broke Arms', closed in the 1960s (Lost Pubs Project, 2013). The butchers ceased to trade in the mid-1990s, but then reopened in the early 2000s only to close once again a few years later. Currently the village has one pub and one shop which also combines the post office. The current surviving pub, the 'Nags Head', has been the only social drinking establishment in the village since the 1970s. This pub is

leased from a well-known PubCo, and since the millennium has not had a stable or consistent publican. It has been closed and reopened on several occasions, each time with a different landlord (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). In this village the 'Nags Head' is one of the services that gives the village its social identity: "Our pub has traditionally been at the core of many social events, at all the village fetes we have held, the pub has always been an integral feature, it draws people out of their homes and into a place of interaction" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010).

As a proportion of the population, the local pub does not have a high number of patrons; approximately only 5-10 per cent of village residents frequent. The rest of its regulars come from neighbouring villages, which do not have a local of their own (former publican, Helpringham, 2011). Although a high percentage of residents do not make use of the pub today, this has not always been the case: "I spent a good few nights in the Nags, I would meet friends and enjoy family meals there, but then it closed, when it reopened it was never the same and now I don't use it" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). Several residents made similar remarks to this. The constant changing of hands has been to the detriment of this pub in terms of retaining its core regulars. This is unsurprising, as once people become settled in a routine they can become creatures of habit and hostile to change: "Every Sunday at 6pm on the dot I would go to the pub, meet with... and play dominos, I did this for 30 years. When the pub kept closing and reopening, it changed my routine, in the end it became too much hassle" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). The problem is, if a village pub loses customers, for whatever reason, the chances of it remaining economically viable start to diminish and permanent closure becomes a real possibility (Moseley and Chater, 2000; Woods, 2005). The social knock-on effect of this in terms of personal networking and well-being can be overwhelming. Some residents, when the pub closed temporarily for six months, experienced a decline in their own social well-being: "When it [the pub]

shut my life changed... I don't drive and I can't walk far these days; going to my local was my time to socialise... but that got took away from me and it hurt... at times I became lonely and isolated, it was more than a pub to me it was a social lifeline. When it went so too did a part of my life" (village resident, Helpringham, 2011).

Isolation and loneliness are different things but, should one experience either or both of these, there can be negative impacts on mental and physical health (Age Concern, 2003). There exists a wealth of literature on this (e.g. Dean and Lin, 1977; Grant 1988; Murphy 1987; Wenger *et al.*, 1996). It is not the role of this case study or the thesis to review this but rather document that such issues on occasions may arise from the closure of a village service such as the local pub. Helpringham's pub closed in the autumn/winter 2010 and reopened late spring 2011. Since then it has experienced several different tenants.

Despite there being an overall decline in the social importance of the village pub, over time, it continues to be perceived by many rural inhabitants and experienced by some as a social hub. For example, over 90 per cent of interviewees saw the village pub as a space which offers people the opportunity to meet (planned or by chance) and is conducive to different levels of social interaction. To this end several Lincolnshire village inhabitants remarked that the village pub is a space that facilitates the creation, expansion and strengthening of personal and community social networks: The village pub is "a good place to meet new people from different walks of life and expand our village community" (village resident, Billingham, 2010). It is important to note, however, that the pub continues to include some people and exclude others (see chapter 3), and some of those who are 'included' use it only as a means to gain personal space and do not want to engage with other users. Consequently, the extent to which networks

can be created and sustained in the village pub is questionable. For further discussion of the points discussed in this paragraph see Markham (2013:270-271).

The pub, especially the village pub, has often been portrayed by media sources as a place where people of all generations mix and mingle in a degree of harmony. The reality, however, continues to be substantially different from this. Whilst it has become increasingly common for families to frequent village pubs for meals, there continue to exist distinct divisions when it comes to age and length of residency: “The pub in our village is split... you get us [long-standing residents] and them [newcomers]. They are pleasant enough but they don’t really join in” (village resident, Bicker, 2010). This perceived failure of integration may be occurring for a variety of reasons. On one hand, the newcomers may not want to ‘join’ in but on the other they may feel that they are unwelcome. The comparative process showed that long-standing residents are often set in their ways and dislike the idea of some change even if it could enhance their personal social networks or secure the long term survival of their community: ‘I don’t want my group to change its demeanour; if this happens then the atmosphere may change and I don’t want that’ (village resident, Billingham, 2010). This kind of stubbornness is not unique to this individual. It also exists amongst traditional service providers. A documentary for BBC Wales (2011) highlighted some examples where publicans were refusing to diversify their businesses. They were tunnel focussed on keeping their pub the way it was and were not willing to adapt even if it enhanced their ability to facilitate social integration and thus help them to remain commercially viable and sustainable. This inflexibility and resistance to change by long-standing residents and traditional service providers may be one reason why on occasions there has been a failure of integration between long-standing residents and village newcomers. For example, if the long-standing residents and providers are not accepting of change then anything which suggests change to either their surroundings or their business will be viewed with

suspicion. Many individuals, including traditional rural service providers, village residents and non-village residents hold views about what the rural should look like, what it should contain and how its community should act and behave (see Woods, 2005, 2011; chapter 7 of this thesis). If the reality does not match up to perceived expectations or if the introduction of the new threatens to alter current ways, those who are reluctant to change can end up isolating themselves but may perceive it as a general condition of social isolation. The rural is changing, so to expect it to remain static and unaltered in the global capitalist climate we live in today is unrealistic. If the rural is to prosper and remain sustainable, new residents and enterprises are needed (see Markham, 2012).

The distinctions that occur in pub space, e.g. on grounds of length of residency, can be seen to operate on differing levels. As shown in the above quote there can be a division in the pub itself, with one type of patron congregating in one part of the pub and another in another part. Up until the latter decades of the twentieth century when village pubs went through a period of modernisation by the breweries and PubCos, it was common for there to be a physical division within them – the snug and the public bar (Hutt, 1973). These spaces have characteristically been occupied by occupational social groupings: “I never went into the snug, it wasn’t a place for us [drainage workers] it belonged to the farm owners; the bar was ours” (village resident, Great Hale, 2010). It is interesting but not surprising that this resident perceived the spaces as belonging to a specific group. By definition the village pub is a public place where alcohol can be purchased and consumed (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). Although defined as public and contemporarily understood by many as a place where integration is the ‘norm’, the village pub has traditionally been a place of social grouping segregation: “When I first became a landlord after the war, it was normal for the landowners to be in the snug and the workers in the public bar; although they were civil there was very much an atmosphere of you belong in that area and I in this” (former publican, now a village

resident of North Kyme, 2010, noted on Figure 2 as publican). From selective coding and constant comparison of different types of data, e.g. memos and interviews, it would appear that in the decades following World War Two there was a marked difference in how different social classes perceived and used pub spaces. Class is a notoriously difficult concept, no consensual definition exists and the contextual meaning of the term differs depending on the informing school of thought. It is important to acknowledge that an individual's class status can be fluid, with movement back and forth between different classes often dependant on external economic and social factors. When looking at the concept of class in relation to social groupings within the village pub constant comparison of interviews highlighted that long-standing residents saw the grouping, historically, on two levels, differentiated between those who worked the land and those who owned the land. This distinction was explicitly noted by many male participants, with some acknowledging that the division was obvious when the village had more than one pub: "The Nags was our [land labourers, drainage workers] local, the Willoughby De Broke was theirs [those who owned land]. My boss sometimes came into the Nags but when he did he bypassed us and went straight to the saloon... by today's standards his actions would be seen as ignorant but back then it was normal... workers and bosses didn't socialise, it wasn't the done thing" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). The research of Hunt and Satterlee (1986b) confirms this point about social groups migrating to different pubs. It also, as shown in chapter 3, raises the point that different groupings see the social role of the village pub differently. The constant comparison of my personal memos, made after some of my visits to village pubs for this research, highlighted that this appears to remain the case. For example, several times in my memos I noted that working class residents appear to use pub space to socially engage with existing friends. In contrast middle class residents appear to use

it to 'meet and greet' friends before moving on to another social activity e.g. shopping, visiting a show, going for a meal.

In his work *Distinction* Bourdieu (1984) shows how different social classes use cultural tastes to define them and reinforce their position in society. Examples he uses to show this, in the leisure arena, include the consumption of different types of food and drink, the visiting of different places and the playing of different types of sport as opposed to simply just watching it on the television. For Bourdieu (1984:183) the French café is a working class leisure site where men go not just to drink but to drink in the company of other likeminded men, and thus is a place of companionship. The village pub like the French café can be, given the discussion above, interpreted as a site of companionship for the working class. However, it can also be seen, in line with Bourdieu's (1984) arguments, as a site where the middle class can bolster their identity and so continue to reinforce inequalities between classes. The way in which members of the middle class are seen to use the pub, outlined above, acts to suggest they are resource rich in terms of access to social networks, knowledgeable about restaurants and having disposable income to regularly engage with the practice of fine dining, helping to reinforce middle class identity and social status. Another example of how the middle class does this within pub space is through large round buying and their general presence within pub space. A similar idea to this is shown in the work of Heley (2008:319), which highlights that, when asked, those who appeared to fall into the 'New Squirearchy' openly admitted that the people they associate with in the pub all wear the same type of clothing (checked shirts and jeans), drive Range Rovers, and make a point of buying large rounds. Thus the idea of themselves as being part of a 'New Squirearchy' is correct. At this point it is worth acknowledging that whilst inter-class differences in pub space emerged during the processes of data collection and analysis,



intra-class conflict (outlined in chapter 3) did not and thus, despite being interesting, does not form part of the findings chapters.

The work of Bowler and Everitt (1999) suggests that the traditional divisions that occurred in and between village pubs, namely class divisions, have given way to a single division based on length of village residency. This is questionable; it is more realistic to argue that length of residency divisions have always run alongside more widely recognised class divisions and that rather than displacing them wider social and economic changes have resulted in these length of residency divisions becoming more noticeable. When asked about class divisions, length of village residency and potential divisions between newcomers and long-standing residents, the response time and time again from participants was that there has, up until the last few decades of the twentieth century, been a clear division between the social classes (reinforced by the then dominant village pub features, namely the different areas of the establishment e.g. the snug and the public bar), but also a latent division between long-standing residents and newcomers to the village: “I would say there has always been a division [between newcomers and long-standing residents], it just wasn’t as obvious as the toff and peasant divide... When I first moved to the village in the 70s it took a long time to be accepted by and fully embraced into the local pub clan” (village resident, South Kyme, 2011). ‘Clan’ was a word this resident used to describe an established friendship group comprising those who were born and bred in the village. This quote and indeed the paragraph serve to highlight that some divisions have not superseded other divisions but have instead run alongside and have overtaken them as changes in the wider society have taken place.

Whilst there has been to some degree a changing of the guard in terms of the dominant divisions occurring within and between village pubs it can be argued that different types of village residents continue to perceive the social role of the village pub

differently. The constant comparison of newcomer and long-standing resident data has shown that, in general, those who have resided in villages for less than a decade tend to see the village pub as a place that provides two things: first, opportunities for residents to become more integrated into village life and enhance personal and social networks; second, a means to keep the idea of the rural idyll alive (discussed further in chapter 7): “I’ve lived [in this village] for 4 years now, if I wanted to become more acquainted with other residents and broaden out my friends network then the pub may enable me to do this but I don’t... For me I want to reside in a village and live out my dream of Emmerdalesque village life but not actually participate in it” (village resident, Billingham, 2012). This stance differs from many who have been raised or who are already integrated into the social or cultural norms of the village they reside in: “I don’t use the pub very often but some of my friends do; if it was at risk of closure, I would do all I could to help it remain open to ensure my friends and the rest of the pub community didn’t lose a social lifeline” (village resident, Thorpe Latimer 2010). Although the majority of village residents do see social importance attached to the village pub, it would appear from the constant comparison of memos and interviews that the strength of support and protectiveness of this establishment is partly dependant on length of village residency, with those with longer residency having a stronger bond. This echoes the conclusions of Bowler and Everitt (1999:153) who argue that the bond between village newcomers and the social milieu of the pub is weaker than that of long-standing residents.

Hunt and Satterlee (1986a) and Bell (1994) argue there is a clear and visible divide between old and young and between ‘new’ and long-standing residents. These divisions are complex. There could, for example, be divisions within divisions or different preferences amongst those within a group: “When we [husband and wife] go to the [village] pub we tend to mingle with others who, like us, are fresh to the village... I

tend to go off and play a game of darts with men and my wife sits and enjoys a glass of vino with the ladies” (village resident, North Kyme, 2011). It is not only this village resident who made this type of point, a village resident from Ruskington (2010) made a similar point when they noted that in their experience newcomers sit at one end of the bar (with men sitting on one table and their wives/girlfriends on another) and long-standing residents at the other. In relation to this latter group the participant remarked that it tends to be formed mainly of men (ibid). In addition to this there can be cross cuttings between divisions which are then witness to other divisions. For example, in some village pubs where data collection for this thesis took place there was evident social mixing and interaction between born and bred younger people and village newcomer younger people, cutting across the general division along lines of village residency length. This is evidenced by the following quote: “I come here to have a good time, I will mix with anyone my own age whether they be newbies or not, it doesn’t matter as long as they’re up for a laugh” (village resident, South Kyme, 2011).

This is not to say that all village pubs see a division between patrons; on the contrary, some pub landlords/ladies have drawn upon their entrepreneurial skills to implement strategies such as literary lunches and book circles to try and facilitate integration amongst members of the village pub community (see Wainwright, 2011): “I put in place a quiz night with a weekly cash prize; however, I purposely advertised it as a quiz that would require teams comprised of all ages, cultures etc... The first quiz wasn’t successful; however, as the weeks progressed, the teams became more varied to the point where now every team has a distinct set of members” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). Although this has occurred in some localities it has to be appreciated that it is not happening throughout rural England. In general, it would appear that villages, especially those that have been able to sustain more than one working pub, can witness a separation between different group identities, which can be

maintained and reinforced by village pubs (Hunt and Satterlee, 1986b; Maye *et al.*, 2005; Woods, 2011). For the reasons documented in this and the preceding paragraphs it can be proposed that the role the village pub plays in maintaining community networks is partly dependent on how willing residents are to frequent and engage with others who frequent.

The open coding of interviews revealed an interesting point when looking at the social role of the village pub. It highlighted that some rural inhabitants do not see the pub as adding substance to social networks. For example, 2 participants explicitly made the remark that the pub can be damaging to social networks: “You can make friends in village pubs but you can also lose them, especially if you get smashed, lose your inhibitions and say things you don’t mean” (village resident, Folkingham, 2010). This statement is important; if we deconstruct it, for example, it becomes clear that certain behaviours (e.g. drunkenness) are seen to work to the detriment of social inclusion. This reaffirms some of Leyshon’s (2005, 2008a) findings, namely that those who are unable to maintain control of their bodily functions when drinking alcohol can risk ridicule and marginalisation in pub spaces. From this paragraph, it can be argued that it is a combination of pub culture and individual attributes not just the village pub itself that impedes social networks (for further discussion of some of the points raised in this paragraph, see Markham, 2013).

In addition to the economic impact outlined in chapter 5, the closure of village pubs can have implications for individual village residents, the local community, and the imagery of the village. The following discussion, whilst looking at the impact of closure on each of these facets separately, recognises that in reality they are interrelated. For some individuals the closure of the village pub can result in increasing loneliness and social isolation: “Some people rely on village services such as the pub to keep their social lives alive; when they shut, those people can withdraw from village life and

become isolated” (village resident, Little Hale, 2010). In rural areas the occurrence and impact of loneliness, isolation and exclusion, particularly amongst those of advancing years, have been documented (see CRC, 2007a; Key, 2013). Village residents often see the closure of village pubs as contributing to rates of social exclusion in rural areas. This point emerged from selective coding of interviews whereby a prevalent concept was the idea that some individuals, namely those who ‘rely’ on the village pub for social engagement, become disengaged from their social networks, withdraw from village life and basically become hermits when their village pub closes. Village communities interpret the closure of a village pub in different ways. Some see it in a wholly negative way, in that they view it as a loss of a meeting place, which impacts on community engagement activities and has the potential to attenuate the community. This type of view is one that is shared beyond the participants featured in this research (see, for example, Scruton, 2006). In contrast, some rural inhabitants in villages such as Hudswell, North Yorkshire, have perceived the pub as such a vital social establishment that when it has closed they have set about creating a village co-operative to save it (Pub is the Hub, 2012a; Wainwright, 2011) (paragraph paraphrased and expanded from Markham, 2013:272-273; village pub co-operatives are discussed further in chapter 8).

The following case study, although different from the example documented above, shows how the non-existence of a rural service can bring the community together.

#### Case Study – Swaton

Swaton, South Lincolnshire, is a small village, in 2011 it had an adult population of approximately 184 (North Kesteven District Council, 2011). Service provision in this village has traditionally been very sporadic; it used to be served by a post office but this ceased in the mid-1990s. For a period of time during the 1990s and early 2000s the only

village facilities that remained were the church and the village hall. This, however, has now changed, as two distinct but also now interlinked changes have taken place. First, after 2000 the community set about creating a portable pub in the village hall, which would serve the community at least on a monthly basis. This project can be regarded a success: “The portable pub is ace... it’s nice having a place to drink in the village... somewhere to chill and relax with friends, it’s lovely, especially on summer evenings” (village resident, Swaton, 2010). This community venture is now a permanent fixture of the village calendar. Residents interviewed from this village had nothing but praise for the service itself and for those members of the community who organise and run it. This community venture has been helped along by the implementation of a ‘new’ niche rural enterprise – the brewery store and visitor centre. This enterprise opened after 2000 and has gone from strength to strength. It is located on the outskirts of the village and in addition to the features already mentioned there is a farm store and a cafe (Swaton Brewery, 2012). This enterprise is a brewer of real ale and supplies the portable pub with its drinks. This obviously has commercial benefits for the brewery itself, but it may also be a factor in bringing the community together even further: ‘I was introduced to real ale by my grandfather at our home made pub... I think it’s amazing, beats the stuff you get in town, it’s one of the factors which keep me returning every month, that and fact that me, my dad and my granddad can enjoy a pint within a 5 minute walking distance of our houses’ (village resident, Swaton, 2010, paraphrased). There were a variety of comments made along similar lines to this by different village residents. The common theme that ties most of the interviews from this village together is the notion that their social lives have become more fulfilled as a consequence of the portable pub and the brewery store. If there had been an existing pub in this village, these ventures may never have materialised. It can be proposed that it was as a result of there being no

social gathering place like a pub that the community rallied together to create one and thus enhanced personal and community networks within and outside the village.

Although village residents and communities often start with solid intentions to ensure their villages are able to retain local services, it can become an overwhelming task, fraught not only with economic obstacles but with the difficulties in maintaining individual and collective motivations and commitments: “I remember when [one of] our pub[s] closed the community rallied to save it, we had meetings with the PubCo and everything... they even agreed to renovate it if we made a success of it. As the weeks went by... support and motivation dwindled, we never even got to open the pub...” (village resident, Folkingham, 2010). This brings into question the vigour of village communities *per se*. For example, many individuals whilst wanting to play an active role in the local community often have personal aspirations and goals that outweigh this desire. Furthermore, those who do play an active role and are passionate about the retention of village services can get swept away in the momentum when it comes to pledging things including time: “I never realised how much time I needed to devote to get the pub back on its feet... in the end I had to walk away from the project. No results were being produced and I have family and career commitments...” (village resident, Great Hale, 2011). Getting a pub to be commercially viable is not an easy task, as Pub is the Hub (2012b) makes clear, it takes time and patience. The following quote is only true for that individual, but it serves to highlight that people’s motivations and commitments to projects can wane: “I get bored very easily, I saw no real advances in the community project aimed at reviving one of our locals so I left and joined other local projects in Donington...” (village resident, Quadring, 2011).

It is not only waning motivations and commitments that can lead to projects becoming unsustainable. On occasions, residents are unable to produce the results many

of them set out to achieve, namely the long-term retention of one or more village services because of factors beyond their control. The following case study details how, despite numerous attempts, by various entities including ‘the community’ and the owning PubCo, to give it a new lease of life, Great Hale village pub was deemed (principally by its PubCo) no longer a viable commercial or social enterprise, and because of wider social and economic changes taking place in the surrounding areas most probably never would be again.

#### Case Study – Great Hale

Great Hale is a village in Southern Lincolnshire, bordering the larger village of Heckington. It has a stable population. In 2011 it had an adult population of approximately 626 (North Kesteven District Council, 2011). Over the course of time this village has lost several of its services including the post office in January 2008, the justification for its closure being it was no longer commercially viable (Sleaford Standard, 2008). For many years this village was served by the Nags Head, but over the last three to four years this pub has been subject to sporadic and now permanent closure. During the periods of closure there were attempts by a variety of sources, including the community, to reopen it, with aspirations to restore it to a viable social and commercial enterprise. In 2008, new tenants were recruited by a well-known PubCo; in addition to reviving the dart and pool competitions, which formed a staple part of the Nags culture for many decades, the serving of food recommenced. There was, however, a twist: rather than focusing solely on serving traditional English dishes the focus became on African food (Great Hale Newsletter, 2008). This resulted in what can be described as a curve model in customers. In the beginning, there was some trepidation. Whilst many old regulars returned there was little take up of meals. As time progressed and word spread of its opening and food cuisine, there became an increase and then steady flow of



custom, but this custom petered out resulting in the enterprise becoming unviable in its current format and it was not long before it closed (village resident, also former barmaid for 3 months, Great Hale, 2010). It is difficult to know exactly why custom petered out, but it was probably due to a combination of factors including changes in staff: “The serving of African cuisine was a slow burner but as word got out about the good food the pub became full of life, which was nice... the novelty factor soon wore off though and when a new chef came in, well that was the end of the road the quality of the food took a nose dive in my opinion. It was a shame but I wasn’t surprised by the departure of the tenants and closure yet again of the pub” (village resident, Great Hale, 2011)

Maintaining the social sustainability and commercial viability of a village pub relies on a combination of factors, good atmosphere and reputation being two of these. To prevent stultification and keep word of mouth alive, however, there needs to be either targeted marketing strategies or additional events to draw in and retain custom, and even then there is always the possibility that the enterprise is going to struggle to compete with the already established reputation and longevity of other local village pubs: “Why would I go back to the Nags? The Queens Head [Kirkby La Thorpe’s pub] is well known for its food and hospitality... you don’t have to worry about it being shut when you turn up... [and] you’re made to feel welcome. I’ve lived here [Great Hale] all my life and whilst the odd landlord has made the pub homely, many of the inexperienced ones have made it feel cold and clinical” (village resident, Great Hale, 2012). This type of attitude is understandable. If a specific village pub has been labelled and known as one that is repeatedly closing and re-opening several months later under new management then, although not impossible, the task of turning it into a viable commercial enterprise can be fraught with extra difficulty. The trust between the establishment and customers will have been broken, possibly on more than one occasion, and thus rather than being able to tap into previous tenants’ regulars any new

tenant is having to start from scratch and build up a new client base. There are advantages and disadvantages to this. The main advantage is, if few to no past regulars return, there becomes a break with the past, limiting the comparative element that often occurs when village pubs reopen. Any new strategies the enterprise may implement are then more likely to be met with optimism and acceptance as opposed to hostility and pessimism, as those who choose to visit are likely to have been attracted by the offerings provided. The downside to not being able to tap into the market of previous tenants' regulars is that until the snowball effect occurs and a new loyal client base is built up business could be sporadic, which could affect the short-term commercial viability of the enterprise. This is why it is important that, prior to opening, a village pub must disseminate its plans in terms of opening hours and goods and services offered.

Each time the Nags Head closed, the community pulled together to try and save it but did little to help retain it once it had reopened: "[In 2010] after the pub closed yet again I volunteered my time and tradesman's skills to help get it back on its feet, I just wanted to see it back to its former glory of the late 70s" (village resident, Great Hale, 2010). The pub did reopen in 2010 but in the time that followed until its final closure in May 2012 there was a succession of sporadic closures and different, often perceived by research participants as inexperienced, landlords. It can be argued that these reasons played a part in residents' decisions not support the pub once it reopened. During the phase of open coding it emerged that, although supportive of the idea of having a village pub, many residents were dissuaded from using it, once it reopened, because of their past experiences and through fear that these experiences could be repeated.

Many residents made the point that residents have, because of the constant debacles of closure and inexperienced landlords, migrated to neighbouring pubs. When asked about how the closure had impacted on those who relied on the pub for their

social networks, the responses received were along similar lines to this comment: “When it first closed, it was devastating, the old men who had been used to meticulous routine were lost... some organised their day around going for a pint; when it closed their routine changed and many were unable to handle that and went into themselves. It took a while but with support from their neighbours they came out of their shell and started to visit other nearby [village] pubs and rebuild their routine” (village resident and local historian, Helpringham, 2010). Those individuals whose social well-being suffered as a result of not being able to deal with the change associated with the closure of their local are unlikely to change their new found routine from fear of the same happening again. This is especially the case if their local pub has been renowned for constantly changing hands or closing: “I didn’t support the Nags when it reopened. I wanted to but I have made new friends at the Nags in Heckington. Unlike when I went to our pub, I don’t worry about losing my friends or social life. In all my years in this area... I’ve never known the Nags at Heckington close... maybe I’m being naive but I don’t think it ever will” (village resident, Great Hale, 2012)

In the months that followed October 2011 there were major attempts, by a new, experienced publican, to get the pub back on its feet. The serving of local food and the putting on of events, such as the appearance of former darts player John Lowe (supported by a well-known local radio station) were adopted (Sleaford Standard, 2012a). In spite of wide advertisement, the offerings by the reopened and under new management pub failed to draw in high custom levels or even recapture the steady flow of custom of the previous tenants, and this led to poor sales.

The result of poor custom levels and sales was the closing of the pub for good in May 2012. The building subsequently went to auction, and the new owners are currently in the process of renovation, with plans to turn it into a pre-school nursery (village resident, Great Hale, 2012). There was a campaign by some local residents to

disseminate the importance of the pub to the Great Hale community and the PubCo (Calendar News Online, 2012) but this to some extent was ignored. For example, the Pubco continued to maintain the argument that this pub was entered into auction as a consequence of its estates review (Calendar News Online, 2012). It is difficult to know whether or not this pub was commercially viable. This case study provides examples where the pub was viable and enjoying renewed custom. However, it also shows that regulars disliked the constant publican changes and that this affected their decision to frequent the pub.

The closure of village pubs has led some rural inhabitants to argue that the ripple effect that can result (i.e. the closure of one rural enterprise having a knock-on effect on the survival of other enterprises - Burgess, n.d., cited in Hill, 2008) is leading villages to lose their social identity: “When villages lose their social meeting places communities die... [the village] becomes sleepy and the life is sucked out of its community” (village resident, Leasingham, 2011). Comparison of newcomer and long-standing resident data has shown that this type of view is more common amongst village newcomers who are seeking entry into an idyllic rural living. This idea of village communities being under threat is an interesting one. For many years the British media has portrayed villages as being places in which the local services, first and foremost, followed by community integration, form the basis of its inhabitants’ existence. In days gone by, this was pretty much the case for some residents (see Titchmarsh, 2010). However, as times have changed so too have villages and their communities. In contrast to previous decades a high percentage of those who live in rural localities work and socialise in or around other, particularly urban, localities. This, combined with greater personal mobility, has led a number of residents to have other commitments and responsibilities outside of the village. Consequently, whilst these residents may embrace their local services and

community, they simply do not want or cannot afford the same level of commitment as previous generations.

In recent decades some publicans, as a means to help sustain their rural community and the image of it, have encouraged and facilitated the setting up and running of village clubs and societies within village pub spaces. In 1963, for example, the former Railway pub in the village of Heckington offered its tap room for use by the village youth club so that local young people had a regular and consistent environment where they could socialise and enjoy themselves (Sleaford Standard, 2012b). It can be argued that such a venture could have benefits for the long term sustainability of the village pub involved, thus helping to sustain the social value it adds to individuals and communities. If individuals are familiar with the establishment and have already associated it with the enhancement of social networks and well-being they are likely to continue frequenting it. As a result the village pub is able to continually grow or replenish its core client base: “Lots of friendship groups including my own, who used the youth club went on to use the pub, it’s just a crying shame that it closed when it did... I’m sure many more generations would have done the same had the pub stayed” (village resident, Heckington, 2011). Whilst this assertion may be true it has to be recognised, as shown in chapter 4, that overall the pub’s social importance has, over time, declined; thus, whilst the transition from youth club attendance to pub attendance (as described in the quote) may have continued, if the pub had stayed open, it would probably have been on a smaller scale than in the mid/late 1960s.

In twenty-first century England it is becoming increasingly common to see village pubs house books clubs, history societies or other commercial services such as the post office (see Countryside Agency, 2001). In general, publications that disseminate stories about this type of diversification in pubs portray village resident reaction towards them as wholly positive (see Countryside Agency, 2001). This

research, however, has revealed that this is not always the case. Open coding of interviews suggested that many village residents do not like the idea and would prefer services to remain separate from one another: “Pubs should stick to what they are good at, selling alcohol and food... post offices in village pubs is wrong. Village services should, as far as is possible, remain separate. That said, if it keeps services open and gives people a place to meet it could be a worthwhile venture” (village resident, Ruskington, 2010) (section paraphrased from Markham 2013:274-275).

More detailed analysis in the form of selective coding and the comparison of data from newcomers and long-standing residents showed not only that both groups dislike the idea of another service being in the vicinity or grounds of their village pub but that this dislike is underpinned by different reservations. Many village newcomers believe that it lessens the individual services, the image of a village and its status: “I think one service in another is problematic; whilst it does maintain the services and provides communities with a meeting place it devalues the worth of the services and the village as a whole. Ultimately the services lose their identity and the village loses its character and its charm” (village resident, Billingham 2010). Many long-standing residents are also reluctant to accept this type of change but this is mainly through fear that it could impact on and thus disrupt their memories of yesteryear: “I’m not against the post office going in the pub grounds but I worry that it could alter my experience of the services and in doing so eclipse or blight my memoirs of living here and frequenting the services” (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). This suggests that, whilst there is some ambivalence amongst some long-standing residents towards this type of change, they recognise that change may be needed for their village’s services to survive.

When change actually takes place, however, it appears that it can arouse resentment. The following case study provides an example of how the rise of ‘new’ niche enterprises (e.g. travel agents, glassware shops, antiques dealer) and the decline of

more traditional services (post office, pub) in one village has led some long-standing residents to argue that villages are becoming disjointed and divided in terms of the services they provide and that the changes are detrimental to the survival of traditional services. The case study, however, shows that it is not always the types of services but rather the continuing division around length of residency, discussed earlier in this chapter, that gives rise to the perception of ‘them’ and ‘us’.

#### Case Study – Navenby

In recent decades the village of Navenby, Lincolnshire, has witnessed an influx of ‘new’ niche rural enterprises, including a glassware store, travel agents, and a vintage clothes shop. Many of these, but not all, are owned and run by residents who are village newcomers. This village, although it has seen a decline in the number of traditional services, still retains many traditional enterprises such as a bakery, newsagents and two pubs, many of which are owned and run by long-standing residents (various village residents, Navenby, 2010, 2011). In one respect the different types of services have fitted together in a harmonious fashion. Residents are able to enjoy a multitude of services in one locality, with the opportunity to socialise and expand their personal networks. Service providers are able to feed off one another and in doing so help maintain their viability and sustainability. As one former publican of this village remarked (2011): “If our pub had closed then the local services we bought our meat and vegetables from would have suffered and that would have been bad for them and the village’s economy as a whole”.

The general feeling amongst the participating residents from this village was that the traditional services and the ‘new’ services do not ‘sit well’ together: “Sometimes the village seems separated, you have... the old school services, then you have... these fandangled upcoming services, which in my mind haven’t fitted into our

way of village life... If they are willing to support the village and the traditional services then I'm all for it but they don't. Take what happened to our post office... we lose this but keep a travel agents, it makes no sense to me" (village resident, Navenby, 2011). This resident was remarking on the closure of their local post office, which had been an integral feature of the village for a number of decades. In 2011 the owners decided to retire and the post office was put out to tender but there were no takers so when the proprietors vacated the premises the village post office ceased to exist.

It would appear from the processes of constant comparison, sensitising and theorising that much of the resentment directed against the 'niche' services comes from long-standing residents and is aimed at village newcomer business entrepreneurs themselves rather than the services they are providing: "They come in and swan around like they own the place. I quite like the fact we have a diverse array of services but on principle I choose not to frequent the ones whose owners have imposed themselves and their views on the village and changed the feel of the place" (village resident, Navenby, 2010).

One solution to try and minimise this resentment as well as the rate of closure of traditional services would be for everyone (e.g. service providers and village residents) to work openly with one another on opportunities as and when they arise. These do not have to be wholly business orientated projects, for example, they could be getting involved with community events as a means to facilitate social integration into existing community networks. Many village newcomer service providers reside in the village where their business is located but, as has been discussed in this chapter, not all village newcomers want to be integrated into existing village communities. However, it may be necessary for them to engage or be willing to engage in community events in order to ensure the commercial viability of their business.



Sometimes it is not that new service providers do not want to become involved with other local businesses or village projects; rather it is that they do not have resources to do so or believe that the venture being offered is not a worthwhile investment. In the case of Navenby, the post office was being offered to other local service providers either as a stand-alone enterprise or a co-operative but with a lower income contract than the then proprietors were receiving (local service provider also village resident, Navenby, 2011). The outcome of this was that the remaining service providers were not prepared to accept the deal on offer to them, resulting in the eventual closure of the village post office. This raises the question of whether it was a viable proposition in the first instance. If cuts are being made, as was the case with the post office, or if a specific business is no longer ideally suited to its location then individuals are going to be reluctant to take on such enterprises through fear of them being commercially unsustainable: “On the surface the post office looked a good opportunity, with its established client base and regular income but when thinking about it why would I want to take it on, same work less money, no thank you... also in this current economic climate you never know if it would be shut down therefore the risk is too great, I have a family to support” (local service provider also village resident, Navenby, 2011). If a business, which is up for tender, comes to be perceived by potential entrepreneurs as being a liability, for whatever reason, then it can be argued that it may not be the opportunity it first seemed to be.

To sum up, village pubs are seen by many rural inhabitants as helping to create and maintain social networks. In reality, however, this can be limited as not all residents use the village pub or want to engage with fellow customers. The closure of a village pub is perceived by different types of residents (men, women, newcomers, long-standing) to result in the loss of a social gathering place, which can lead to some

individuals experiencing a decline in their overall quality of life. In relation to communities this loss is perceived to lead to disengaged communities. This, however, is not necessarily the case; on occasions the loss of the village pub can act as springboard to bring the community together and reactivate a closed service. To try and halt the decline and thus combat the perceived negative social effects of rural enterprise closure, some village pubs have offered and embraced the idea of facilitating clubs (e.g. book club, youth club, history club) and/or delivering other services such as the post office. Many villagers (newcomers and long-standing) expressed trepidation when discussing the idea of the pub delivering another commercial service. The perceptions giving rise to this trepidation were different in the two groups but both held the view that services should remain, as far as possible, separate. To conclude, whilst there has been an undeniable decline in the number of village pubs, they continue to be perceived as socially important by rural inhabitants, being used as a social lifeline for some residents and seen by many as a focal gathering point where they can mingle, have a chat and generally discuss community matters. Consequently, they are experienced by some and seen by others as playing a vital role in helping to sustain personal and community networks.

## Chapter 7: The rural public house: A cultural icon

It is a chocolate box scene, a village pub which exudes charm and character located at the heart of a busy yet serene community. It is an image most of us can relate to in one way or another. Whether it is through lived experience or through the eyes of media portrayals we all hold ideas regarding the village pub, how it should look both internally and externally, what it should retail, how its patrons should behave and how it has fitted and should fit into ‘village life’. The village pub for many people represents more than a place to enjoy a beverage; it is a place of history and heritage. This finding was not wholly surprising. Social drinking establishments have been around for centuries and they include many village pubs (Haydon, 1994). Moreover, their origins are often reflected in their names and how they represent themselves (ibid). It is interesting to note that grounded theory analysis found that pub names and signage are important in relation to people’s perceptions and preconceptions of villages and their communities: “A village isn’t a village without a pub and its swinging sign... personally I’m not fussed if my local closed... I don’t use it but its sign should be preserved” (village resident, Billingham 2010). It is as a result of this finding and such remarks that a chapter of this thesis has been dedicated to a discussion of the cultural importance of the village pub.

The overarching aim of this chapter is to explore the cultural importance attached to country and village pubs by rural inhabitants and connected actors. It starts by looking at the differences between these types of pub before going on to examine what village pubs and, more importantly, their imagery means for villages. There will also be some discussion regarding the changes that have taken place internally and externally to village pubs and the extent to which these changes, and the overall decline in the number of village pubs, have impacted on perceptions and experiences of the

village pub. In fulfilling the chapter's aims there will also be discussions of the main differences between the lived and imagined experience of the village pub and more generally the rural; how the imagined experience is located in the wider rural idyll and how the village pub experience (lived and imagined) helps to keep the rural idyll alive. The chapter makes use of case study examples to illustrate and reinforce key findings.

As with previous chapters this chapter will distinguish between traditional services (e.g. butchers, bakeries, pubs, newsagents, post offices, local stores, blacksmiths and local garages) and the newer niche services (e.g. travel agents, glassware stores and Wi-Fi cafes). These two lists are not exhaustive; they merely serve to show the reader what is meant by traditional and niche services in the context of this chapter and, more importantly, in the entire thesis.

When looking at pubs, particularly in rural geographical areas, and the types of history and heritage they disseminate it is possible to identify the 'country' pub and the village pub. The 'country' pub can be defined as a pub which symbolises national history and heritage whilst a village pub can be defined as a pub which symbolises and/or is representative of local history and heritage. In 1393 pub signs became, by law, compulsory. Many individuals at the time were illiterate and the sign provided ale tasters with the knowledge that the place was a social drinking establishment (Brandon, 2010). The signs were the first identifiable hallmark to be ascribed to pubs; later, as literacy rates increased, names were also applied. Pub names, it can be argued, are one of the main determinants of whether or not a village pub is also a 'country' pub. The 'country' pub is a national symbol, thus it can exist in both rural and urban localities. For example, many pubs across Britain are named after the Marquis of Granby, an eighteenth century commander in the British Army, who bought them for his NCOs who had retired through injury or ill health. His name thus became a national symbol (Brandon, 2010).

There are many examples (e.g. Red Lion pubs and Coach and Horse pubs) which could be drawn upon to show that ‘country’ pubs have national history and heritage attached to them. The key point to be drawn, however, is these pubs evoke the diversity of Britain’s history and identity. For example, throughout the course of history social drinking establishments have been central to Britain’s social, cultural and political development. The different names and signs of ‘country’ pubs across Britain reflect and thus subconsciously disseminate different national happenings. One of the more familiar names and signs in rural Lincolnshire and all over Britain is the ‘Royal Oak’ or ‘The Oak’. This name commemorates key events associated with the restoration of Charles II (Brandon, 2010). Pubs with names and signs such as the ‘Anne of Cleves’ and the ‘Victoria’ - more commonly known as the ‘Vic’ (see Brandon, 2010) also disseminate national happenings but from different time periods: respectively the Tudor and Victorian era. ‘Country’ pubs, therefore, disseminate not just one but different aspects of Britain’s history and heritage. As a consequence they help sustain the nation’s social, political and cultural identity.

Village pubs may or may not be ‘country’ pubs. If they are they can often encompass elements of local history and heritage. The Lion and Royal in Navenby, for example, is a ‘country’ pub with national symbolism but at the same time is reflective of local history. In 1870, the Prince of Wales, Edward VII, presented the then publican with feathers when he stopped by to change his clothes after hunting. These feathers are still there today, presiding over the front door (Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, 2002).

If a village pub is not a ‘country pub’ it is often highly representative of the history and heritage of the locality, and its name and signage reflect either local events or distinguished landmarks and local people (Wainwright, 2011). In Helpringham, for example, the former pub the Willoughby De Broke paid homage in name and signage to

Lord Willoughby De Broke, an individual who owned a significant amount of land and property throughout Lincolnshire (village resident and local historian, Helpringham, 2010). In Heckington the former Railway pub, which ceased trading in 1967, reflected the fact that it was located opposite the village's railway station (Cartwright, 2012).

The 'country pub' can be described as being unique and synonymous with the perception of English identity: "When you have lost your inns, drown your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England" (Hilaire Belloc, 1943 cited in Hutt, 1973:7). The association between the pub and England can be interpreted on differing levels, especially when placed in the context of the rural. Those who live in the countryside can often have a different interpretation from those who have visited it sporadically or never at all. Many long-standing rural residents see the village pub in the context of the past, reminisce about the 'good old days' and see the decline in number or the changing character of such pubs as a threat to their personal memories: "Me and my mates would go to the local once we finished work at the sluice... they were the good old days, stood at the bar with a pint, a smoke and me mates before going home to the missus for tea" (village resident, Helpringham, 2011).

To a degree many long-standing residents look at the village pub through rose tinted glasses and talk fondly about their experiences of it but neglect to mention many of its negative facets. Before and even after World War Two, pubs were renowned for having poor infrastructure, including sanitation, and (as shown in chapter 6) different physical spaces for different socio-economic groups, with the land workers typically frequenting the public bar and land owners the more reserved saloon, also known as the lounge. The spatial differentiation of users often reflected a 'them' and 'us' culture, and the physical divide, it can be argued, reinforced this and, to a degree, acted as a barrier to networking amongst different socio-economic groups: "Even if I had wanted to have mixed with the 'prim and proper' who visited the saloon bar the fact that we were

divided by a wall made it seem like I couldn't, like it was wrong... against the rules" (village resident, Thorpe Latimer, 2010).

Pub infrastructure has undergone much change since the 1960s. The interior in particular has undergone some re-invention. Aided by changes in legislation, namely the 1964 Licensing Act which enabled for the first time one room only bars to have a spirit licence, owners set about refurbishing their premises (Hutt, 1973). One of the biggest changes that took place was the abandonment of the saloon and a modernisation of the furniture (ibid). Other changes were made to bring pubs up to modern standards of health and hygiene. The big breweries also set about renovating their pubs to encompass many other facets of modern living; for example, soft furnishings were introduced to replace predominantly wooden ones and gaming machines, kitchens and dining areas made their first appearance (see Pratten, 2007b; 2007c). Many of these physical changes ran in tandem with commercial strategies like the happy hour. The combination of physical and commercial strategies it can be argued was the industry's response to the changing economy and their attempt to attract more people into frequenting pubs and for longer periods of time, resulting in increased revenue. As Worpole (1992) acknowledges, the 1970s saw the successful transferring of commercial strategies aimed at influencing outlook and usage of leisure time from North America to England.

In urban localities, as the night-time economies grew some pubs started to take on an ever new persona. Theme and chameleon establishments (that is, pubs in the day and discothèques, bars and clubs at night) became increasingly the norm (see Chatterton and Hollands, 2002; Hobbs *et al.*, 2003). The pub in the 1970s was changing internally and externally, there was an 'out with the old and in with the new' attitude. Although there were marked differences in the changes that occurred in some urban pubs compared to rural ones, there were also similarities. For example, the sprawling of corporate identity schemes and the attempts to revamp some pubs into the style of

Tudor drinking establishments was not unique to either urban or rural pubs (see Hutt, 1973)

Pubs have often formed part of a village's identity and reflected the area's history or heritage through their appearance and product range. The introduction of corporate identity schemes in the 1970s, however, led to many village pubs being transformed into buildings with specific colour schemes and lettering depending on their attached brewery (Hutt, 1973). The consequence of this, it can be argued, was that some village pubs no longer expressed their own identity but rather that of their brewery, meaning that some village pubs became no different to others owned by the same company. In contemporary and popular culture, sameness has predominated, and is seen to provide comfort and safety.

The policy by the big breweries to brand all their pubs was seen by some participants as wholly commercial. The CAMRA representative (2010), for example, noted that by making their pubs clearly recognisable, the big breweries, hoped that consumers who had a preference for their drinks would choose their pubs over their competitors. Superficially, this sounds reasonable; commercial branding is powerful, and consumers tend to align themselves with brands, often citing trust as the justification for remaining loyal to them. In many villages, however, the branding of pubs was not always received warmly by regular patrons and in some instances was detrimental to retaining their custom: "I remember when our Nags Head became awash with dark red and the Bass logo, even the [beer] mats were replaced. I didn't like it, it went from being special to just like any other Bass owned pub" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). "What I didn't like was the fact that the [pub name] became a subtitle to the Watney Mann name... I did continue to frequent the pub after its refurb but not for long. It was blitzed but not in a good way. It became more focused on pound



signs and less on community and this was clear in its looks and attitude” (former village resident, Billingborough, 2010).

The fact that some patrons stopped frequenting their local after the cosmetic overhaul is not surprising; just as traditional service providers can be resistant to change so too can village residents. This resistance can, to a degree, be seen as being justified, as some of the changes that took place were not always sustainable. They were gimmickry and based on fashion (see Hutt, 1973). And since fashions keep changing, pubs have to be constantly rebranded and renovated in order to remain commercially viable. Such revamps can lead to short term rises in custom, but can also have a detrimental impact on the retention of core regulars, who can become disillusioned and feel that the place they often regard fondly as their local is no longer their local: “When the pub was commercialised [constantly being rebranded] to reflect the in fashion of the day I stopped going. It lost its local character and personality and rather than being a local it became a corporate identity where villagers could buy a drink from” (village resident, Great Hale, 2010). For many villagers, for a pub to be termed their local it needed to offer more than just a location in the village: “What makes our local a local is not just its locality but its identity, the fact that the beer mats, pictures and trophies tell stories of the village and its residents. It’s what makes it special and local” (village resident, Ruskington, 2012). (For a discussion on the idea of the ‘local’ see Jennings, 2010)

Corporate branding seems to have been the main change that occurred in rural English pubs since the 1970s. This was especially the case in Lincolnshire but there were also instances of renovation with the goal of imitation. The transforming of Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war pubs into the style of Tudor drinking establishments was also seen by some participants as being popular: “The village only got its own pub at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its fittings and furnishing reflected that. Yet in the

1970s it was turned into something from the era of Henry the Eighth... [but] it was a poor imitation” (village resident, Bicker, 2010). This was often the case, as many imitation pubs were architecturally flawed and poorly designed, leading to a need for constant revamps to ensure the establishment remained viable and ultimately sustainable (Hutt, 1973).

There is a difference between urban and rural consumer culture. In urban areas there tends to be a large and diverse customer base with a growing desire amongst many, especially young adults, to experience different types of leisure activities: “What I like about going into town [on an evening] is the fact that I can experience new things each time I go... there are always new pubs and clubs opening and they are always a little different from the last...” (village resident, Burton Pedwardine, 2010). In urban areas, therefore, if pubs are to remain competitive in the night-time economy then they may need to reinvent themselves from time to time. To avoid becoming stultified, consumer culture needs to repeatedly be in motion (Veblen, 1994 [1899] cited in Hobbs *et al.*, 2003). To this end those providing leisure facilities are required to continually reinvent and market themselves if they are to survive (Rojek, 2000 cited in Hobbs *et al.*, 2003). Rural consumer culture is markedly different to that of urban areas. The customer base of a village pub is much smaller and, whilst many can capture trade from neighbouring villages and passers through, their main clientele tends to consist of a group of regulars who reside in the village: “My pub gets trade from a variety of sources but it’s the steady trade from the village regulars that keeps me in business” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). Thus, it is not always appropriate to constantly reinvent the pub’s image. This is because as shown throughout this thesis many, especially long-standing residents, dislike actual change. Consequently, to constantly change a village pub’s appearance and demeanour could be detrimental to the retaining of such groups: “I don’t like it when pubs change, you just get used to it then it changes,

it's really unsettling. If this pub was to change now, I don't think I would come back (village resident, Ruskington, 2011). This creates a dilemma: if village pubs remain the same then they risk some stultification, but if they change regularly then they risk losing their steady client base; therefore, there is a high element of risk whatever path is chosen.

The 'traditional' village pub is a phrase that is heard very often but is hard to define. There is no set of guidelines or rules that governs what a village pub must contain to be classed as traditional. It is a contested concept: for some people it involves elements such as the retailing of 'real ale' while for others it is about the furnishings or the atmosphere. Open coding of data yielded a range of loose and fluid features, which are deemed by the majority of participants to make up a traditional pub. The main ones are: friendly and welcoming landlord/lady; oak furniture; open fire; last orders bell; real ale; swinging sign; nostalgic name; family friendly; and home cooked food. These last two facets are particularly interesting. Neither can be described as being synonymous with village pubs before the 1970s, in fact quite the opposite situation existed (Buckton, 2005). Since their incarnation, drinking establishments have typically been aimed at and frequented by working class males, and the idea of children being allowed anywhere near a pub was virtually unheard of until the late 1980s (Buckton, 2005; Helpringham village resident and local historian, 2010). Even then it took the decade of the 1990s for pub going to really establish itself as a family friendly leisure pursuit. This was to some degree aided by the pub's diversification into the serving of hot food. Up until the last quarter of the twentieth century social drinking establishments, with the exception of the inn, had typically not served hot food. At best some served either a sandwich or a ploughman's at lunch time but the majority only retailed snacks at the bar, namely nuts and crisps (Pratten, 2007a). This in itself can be considered to be a commercial strategy more than for the consumer's benefit: "My first pub in the early seventies was a wet

one. Yes I served salted cashew nuts but that was only to get people to drink more” (former publican, now a village resident of North Kyme, 2010, noted on Figure 2 as publican).

It is striking to see just how much of a shift has taken place in attitude and how powerful consumer capitalism and consumer culture has been in aiding this shift: “If I didn’t serve food I wouldn’t have [had] a business... once upon a time you couldn’t dream of getting a three course meal from the pub; nowadays it’s deemed the norm and if pubs don’t serve food then they get slated...” (former publican, Helpringham, 2010). One of the common concepts to emerge from open coding was that consumers want a hybrid, when it comes to the village pub: contemporary features such as the serving of hot food and comfort but also features of the old social drinking establishments such as the name, the signage and the last orders bell.

In a village pub the type and arrangement of furniture is important to many patrons: “I love the fact that this place holds so much history within its walls, the furniture is so old, it’s no different to when my grandfather came here but that’s what makes it special knowing that my ancestors sat in the same chairs...” (village resident, Billingham, 2010). On the surface it is surprising how much value many participants attached to the furniture within village pubs, but on looking a little deeper the reason for this becomes clear. Some village pub landlords have gone to great lengths to retain or reclaim furniture that they and/or their patrons claim is part of the pub’s history and heritage, arguing that it is an essential ingredient to its longevity and sustainability (Sleaford Target, 2001). The type and arrangement of furniture can certainly change the atmosphere of a place. By retaining materials such as tables, chairs and the last orders bell they are retaining nostalgia and thus allowing current patrons a link to the past. It is not just any past, however: it is the past of the village they, in most instances, reside in and in some instances it is a link to their ancestors. This is where a polarisation can be

seen to occur between village pubs and chains. In the former, there remains a personal touch and a more intimate relationship between the establishment and the patrons whereas in the latter, profit rules and the materials such as furniture are bulk purchased and arranged in specific ways to encourage spending, leading to a more anonymous and open relationship between the place and the patrons.

Although many long-standing residents have a nostalgic vision of their current or former local's furniture, layout and general ambience, that vision tends to come from yesteryear and thus is representative of the past rather than the present. Whilst long-standing residents are nostalgic in their vision of the village pub and more generally rural living many newcomer residents and those who have never lived in the rural tend to buy into myths, only to experience something different when they move into a village. One of the most widely held myths, relates to social togetherness. For example, a gentleman who, up until 2010, had lived his entire life in the city of Sheffield, reported: "When I first moved to this village I imagined that most residents would use the pub and know everyone else but they don't. It's not the place that I thought it would be" (village resident, Billingborough, 2010). Thus it becomes possible to see that newcomers can have an image of the rural and rural living which contradicts with how it really is. It is often the case that rural living and more importantly the village pub does not meet the expectations of those who move to the village or visit its pub. This is not, however, the fault of the village or pub *per se* but rather the way they have been depicted in serial dramas such as *Emmerdale*, and *Heartbeat*. In each of these serial dramas rural living has been depicted as idyllic and the pub as a place which is attractive to all and where everyone knows and freely mingles with one another. In many instances rural living has been shown as embodying social and community togetherness and village pubs have been shown as sites where social solidarity is facilitated but where tensions between users can also be played out and reinforced.

These representations are nothing new: as far back as the Dickensian era rural living was seen as idyllic with community togetherness being at the heart and the pub was central to key scenes in fictional literature including *Nicholas Nickleby*, 1838-1839, and *Barnaby Rudge*, 1840 (Maye *et al.*, 2005). In reality, however, such representations of rural living and the village pub are out-dated and a significant embellishment on the truth: “Village life isn’t what it used to be and the pub, well, it’s never been like it is on the TV” (village resident, Quadring, 2010). This resident went on to discuss her experiences of rural living today compared to when she was younger. The key ideas to emerge from this were that it has only ever tended to be individual streets within villages that have embodied social togetherness and that even this has declined over the course of time. Approximately 12 other long-standing residents also noted that social networking and togetherness have always occurred in ‘patches’ within villages. Furthermore, 9 of these residents felt that compared to yesteryear, due to wider economic, social and political changes there had been an erosion of community togetherness in the rural and village pub: “It’s definitely true that villages are more socially fragmented than they used to be... I mean they always were but it’s more prevalent now” (village resident, Helpringham, 2011).

The majority of village resident participants in this research classed themselves as current or former pub goers. This group (which comprised both long-standing and newcomer residents) on the whole acknowledged that in their actual experience pub space is often divided, with individual factions (e.g. men, women, long-standing, newcomers) each having their ‘own’ space. Long-standing residents in this group, however, were more accepting of the idea that the pub has only ever embodied social togetherness for a select proportion of the village. From the small quantity of data collected from non-pub goers it was possible to see that this view extended to those of them who were long-standing residents. In contrast the few non-pub going newcomers,

featured in this research, were highly reluctant about accepting that village pub space continues to be exclusionary as well as inclusionary and that only a small proportion of village residents actually make use of the pub. This discussion suggests that village newcomers, especially those who do not use the village pub, have an image of it that contradicts what it is really like. The focus of this research, as outlined in chapter 2, was on publicans, those who use(d) the village pub and those who ascribe importance to the village pub, to explore how and why they view and/or experience the village pub as they do; thus non-pub goers only formed a small sample. Given the emerged findings discussed in this paragraph further research attention on the perceptions of non-pub goers is merited and would allow for an in-depth comparison between pub goers and non-pub goers that would further extend our knowledge of the pub in the rural community.

By continuing to present rural living and village pub as a place of strong community togetherness, where everyone openly socialises, the media are, to a degree, mythologising rural living and village pub. In doing this they are helping to raise people's expectations. In some instances these expectations can be partially or fully met: "I love visiting the Barge, it's everything I think a village pub should be... it's busy with everyone chatting to one another in a lovely friendly and warm atmosphere and you can get great food, what more could you want from a village pub?" (village resident, Heckington, 2010). This, however, does not tend to be the norm: "Very few [village] pubs I've visited since I moved here in 2004 are like I imagined... rather than the majority of village residents visiting them there has only been a select few and the pubs well they're more dull and uninviting than I thought they would be, I honestly thought all village pubs would have an open fire place and last orders bell but they don't (service provider also village resident, Navenby, 2011). When people's expectations are not met they can become dispirited and this can lead them to either overlook the village

pub in favour of alternative leisure pursuits or seek to change the village pub to something more to their liking (discussed later within this chapter). The discussions above serve to support the idea, outlined in chapter 3, of long-standing residents having an experience of rural living, which contradicts the image that newcomers have (of what the village is like or should be like).

There are two ways in which the village pub can be experienced: as lived and as imagined. These two modes of experience can impact on one another: imagination can affect our lived experience and our lived experience of things can change how we imagine them. Those who have a lived experience of the village pub understand that it is different from how it is portrayed in media and fictional representations, but they tend to view the pub nostalgically, through their experiences, of yesteryear rather than those of today. This can be seen from the following quote: “I tended to sit with the same group of people... I enjoyed myself... I still go to the same pub and sometimes I find myself imagining and recreating [in my mind] the experience [of the pub] I had 40 years ago... The reality [in terms of appearance and ambience] of my local is now very different to how it was back then but let’s not talk about that” (village resident, Billingham, 2010). This serves to show that long-standing residents hold memories of how their village and its pub used to be which differ and in some respects contradict how the village and its pub (should it still have one) are today.

Those with lived experience of the village pub are often willing to challenge the portrayals by television programmes, newspaper reports, literary classics and paintings: “In the 90 years I’ve lived here it’s never been like on Heartbeat it’s so false. Take village pubs, they definitely weren’t as idyllic as shown in this show. I mean they were ‘spit and sawdust’ and women hardly went in them... but you don’t see that on Heartbeat do you? No, you see the opposite, men and women always enjoying each



other's company in nice, cosy and comfy surroundings" (village resident, Helpringham, 2010).

Due to changes in legislation (e.g. smoking ban, health and safety) and ever evolving leisure pursuits the village pub experience of yesteryear is unlikely ever to be recreated. Although reminiscing and at times tinted with rose coloured glass, the lived village pub experience does provide a glimpse of how it fitted into village life and allows for comparison of the lived and imagined. The lived experience has similarities to the imagined, but it can be argued that the imagined idealises the establishment: "The village pub [when participant first start visiting] wasn't what I imagined; instead of being a hive of activity with all and sundry visiting with an open fire and luxury interior it was a select few residents with a gas heater in the corner and décor which was dull. The atmosphere was nothing like [what is shown] on television" (village resident, Burton Pedwardine, 2010). This is a problem that all village pubs face: they have to contend with and manage people's expectations and adopt strategies that are best suited to help them remain commercially viable. Sometimes their methods go against the grain of what people expect (such as locating one commercial service in the grounds/locality of another) but, as research for this thesis shows, many would rather this happen than for the pub to cease trading.

In contrast to what is imagined, not everyone frequents the village pub: "I first became a [village pub] landlord in the late 60s/early 70s, the trade was steady... Certainly more residents visited compared to nowadays but by no means did I see a high proportion of the village population. I would say only about 15 to 20 per cent of villagers popped in with about 5-10 per cent being regulars" (former publican, Helpringham, 2010). The constant comparison of coded data found that there are three main, and at times combined, reasons as to why some village residents do not visit their local pub. The first reason relates to cost. Some people simply cannot afford to frequent

the pub: “I would love to go to the local pub [more often] but it’s too expensive, I can get a bottle of wine from the shop for the same price as a glass at the pub... I know it’s not the same and I do miss the social side of the pub but I have to think of the wider picture at the end of the day. I have bills to pay and children to feed” (village resident, South Kyme, 2011). Another reason pertains to demographics and employment: “I like the fact my village has a pub but I must confess [due to time commitments and other leisure pursuit preferences] I don’t use it” (village resident, Waddington, 2010). The third reason relates to uneasiness. This research found that many non-regular pub goers (male and female) felt uneasy when they entered their local: “I hate walking into the pub, I feel like everyone turns around and stares at me, they probably don’t, but in my experience it always seems to go deadly quiet when a non-familiar face initially walks in” (village resident, North Kyme, 2010).

The imagined experience of the country and village pub can be located in the wider context of the rural idyll. The rural has often been portrayed by the media and literary sources as, in contrast to the city, a picturesque place which is dominated by fields of green, is in harmony with nature and has thriving local and close communities (Morris and Morton, 1998; Woods, 2011). The village pub continues to offer its customers this and other representations of the rural. It also reinforces these representations in a number of ways, including through gentrification (discussed later in this chapter), aesthetic features and cultural diversification (see chapter 8).

The romantic representation of the rural is also offered and reinforced by the village pub. For example, its displays of stuffed wildlife, such as pheasants and foxes (especially their tails) are, essentially, an expression of the romantic view of nature as powerful and mysterious, and of man’s place in that nature as heroic and daring: “Stuffed animals in a village pub, shows you’re in the countryside... I never think about how they [the animals] became to be stuffed, for me I associate wildlife with the

countryside, and foxes on display reinforce my ideas” (former publican, Helpringham, 2011, was resident of Helpringham for two months before becoming a publican<sup>14</sup>). A similar type of view cropped up a number of times during this research. For example, some village residents (both newcomers and long-standing) saw the inclusion of stuffed wildlife in the village pub as idyllic and mentioned that they believed it symbolised part of the countryside’s green and pastoral landscape with wildlife being at the heart: “When you see the pheasants and fox tails you realise just how close to nature you are when in the countryside, it’s lovely, knowing that there is lovely wildlife in the area where you’re sat enjoying your pint... it makes you feel as if you’re at one with nature” (village resident, South Kyme, 2011). The village pub then serves to bring its customers closer to nature in the way envisaged by romantic poets and writers. The romantic rural idyll attaches importance to ‘heroic’ activities such as hunting, fishing and shooting, whose paraphernalia are well represented in the village pub.

The rural idyll is a concept that has to a degree been imposed on the rural by outsiders and as a result can be described as a concept that “seeks to construct reality in a certain way rather than representing [what is actually there]” (Woods, 2011:22). In the early 1990s services such as the village pub, shop, post office and hall were highlighted as being the foundations for a more idyllic rural for existing and future residents (see Lievesley and Warwick, 1992, in Bowler and Everitt, 1999). Open coding, later confirmed by selective coding, highlighted that villages rarely live up to how they are represented in the rural idyll, so those seeking entry into this idyllic way of life are often disheartened when they find that their imagined experience is not met: “I don’t regret moving to Heckington but it’s not the serene place I anticipated... I’m just glad it’s retained its pubs and shops otherwise I think I would have regretted coming here” (village resident, Heckington, 2010). The constant comparison of newcomer data found

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<sup>14</sup> Classified as a publican on Figure 2, chapter 2.

that many village newcomers, despite not experiencing what they imagined, often wanted to consciously keep the representations of the rural idyll alive. For example, one Billingborough (2010) resident detailed how despite being disappointed by rural living he continued to be attached to his perceptions and to exaggerate the benefits of rural living to his urban friends. Furthermore, he went on to discuss how his disappointment turned to elation when he set up a book club in the village hall and began to see his perceptions of rural living, e.g. community integration and socialisation, being partially realised. Some findings of this research, therefore, support the view of Woods (2011:22) documented at the beginning of this paragraph.

The existence of a country or village pub can be seen to perform a role in keeping the rural idyll concept alive. It is, therefore, part of the idyll itself and as a result how it should look and the role it should perform is imposed by those who buy into this ideal. It is not just the findings of this thesis that highlight this point, the work of Cloke (2003, cited in Maye *et al.*, 2005) makes a similar assertion as it argues that a major component of the imagined rural ‘package’ of easy living where social togetherness and harmony dominate is the existence of the village pub. The concept of the rural idyll therefore plays a large role in the imagined village experience. As the following paragraphs show, many migrants continue to buy into this concept once they have lived in and have experience of the countryside, even when they know the reality does not match the mainstream representations.

Whilst many long-standing residents conceive the village pub from a realistic and/or nostalgic perspective, others (typically newer residents) see it in the broader context of the pastoral, romantic, or mix of both representations of the rural idyll: “We specifically chose to live in this village because it had the pub, we hardly use it but it’s nice to see every time we... leave the village... I don’t want it [the pub] to close but if it did, I would [want the building] to look like a pub... We wouldn’t have chosen to live

in a village which didn't have a pub or shop, it's a sign that the village is in decay..." (village resident, Heckington, 2010). This association between the village pub and the perceived survival of villages and, more importantly, the national identity of villages is one that tends to dominate the views of village newcomers, especially those who have retired to the countryside or have embarked on second home ownership. For example, the comparison of data collected from village newcomers showed that this group tend to perceive a village as incomplete if it does not have a village pub: "A village can't really be called a village when it don't have things like a pub or post office, it's just a location - nothing more nothing less" (village resident, Leasingham, 2011). This linkage between services and village identity has implications. For example, it imposes ideals onto rural spaces and can lead to villages which have been witness to service provision decline becoming labelled as not being 'proper villages' (Hill, 2008). However, different ideas exist about what makes a village. Across the country there are many villages that do not have a pub or a post office but it is generally agreed that they are still villages. Thus these rural idyll impositions are open to question. The general impression I gained from the interviews with village newcomers was that it is the visible loss of service provision (e.g. boarded up pub) compared to actual service provision which often leads them to view a village as incomplete. In other words the perception of incompleteness arises from a perceived absence of a valued facility. In contrast, villages that have no evidence of such an absence continue to be accepted by newcomers as villages, even though they tend to be overlooked in favour of those that have all the characteristics expected of a village (serenity, community togetherness, service provision).

Many village newcomers, as a result of buying into the rural idyll, tend to perceive the village pub as being an essential ingredient in cementing their views on how villages should look and how their inhabitants should function in terms of attitudes

and behaviours. For example, the majority of newcomer interviewees remarked that a functioning pub, which is aesthetically pleasing and has an atmosphere that is open and friendly with all generations socially mixing with one another, is central to a village maintaining its village 'status'. These pub qualities are not new; for example, in 1946 Orwell wrote about his 'perfect' London pub and laid down what he perceived to be its ten most adhering qualities, which included the idea of social interaction being at the institution's core, with staff and customers being, at least in name, familiar with one another (Orwell, 1946). When a village no longer has a pub or has a pub that does not adhere to the perceptions outlined above it can become viewed as being in decline and under threat from globalisation and commercial interests. (For further discussion of the points raised in this paragraph see Markham, 2013:268-269).

The view outlined above is not the only one which exists. For example, some individuals see the decline in service provision as damaging to society's image of villages rather than damaging villages *per se* (Hands, n.d., cited in Hill, 2008). Various media from paintings (e.g. John Constable) to fictional literature (Jane Austen) have conveyed villages as serene and rural living as involving a close-knit community that is facilitated by various amenities (Newby, 1985). These types of image, it can be argued, convey rural idylls that have been influential in how some people perceive the rural. The reality of many villages, however, continues to stand in contrast to the images conveyed in such media. For example, over the last two centuries there has been a steep decline in the number of villages that enjoy amenities like pubs and shops (Buckton, 2005). The portrayals may, therefore, promote an increasingly outdated picture of villages and village life (paraphrased from Markham, 2013:269). In some instances people may move to the countryside with the intention of 'improving' it, to make it fit with their ideals of what it should be like: "Village life has always been an enduring fondness of mine... When I decided to move to the countryside I looked on the web for

my ideal village: small, serene and surrounded by greenery. Eventually I came across it but then I saw its pub was up for sale, I didn't want to move to a village which didn't have one, it wouldn't have been right... so I decided to... buy, renovate and restore it [the pub] helping to bring the village back to life with services" (former publican, Keal Cotes, 2010).

The above is an example of rural gentrification - a process which can be seen to have occurred in a number of the villages featured in this research. Many long-standing residents were keen to point out that they believed newcomers had, more often than not, come into their village and changed properties and services to reflect what they (newcomers) believed rural living to be rather than 'accept' how rural life really is. The general impression given by long-standing residents during data collection was that the social and physical changes to their village by newcomers (e.g. the commuter lifestyle of many newcomers, the introduction of niche enterprises and/or renovation of properties) has been at the expense of community togetherness and the survival of traditional village services such as the pub and post office. Furthermore, there was a fear, by long-standing residents, that further changes to the social and physical landscape of their village (arising from gentrification, continuing changes in employment patterns, and profit pursuit by rural capitalist enterprises) will result in their memories of and affection for their village becoming disrupted and spoiled. As has been shown throughout this chapter, long-standing residents can have memories of the rural which contradict with what the rural is like today. However, there is evidence to suggest that some pubs have been renovated to exhibit some form of imagined rural experience, helping to reinforce both the pastoral and romantic representations of rurality, rather than how the rural 'really' is or was. This can be seen in the cases of village pubs in Keal Cotes and Heckington. In both of these cases former owners decided to renovate their pubs with the goal of restoring some of their rurality. However, it can be argued

that the types of renovations that took place, rather than reflecting the reality of village pubs and rural living, reflected what the owners believed village pubs, rural and rural living to be: “I gutted the place, and put in what you expect to see in a village pub: a one arm bandit... and stuffed [animals]... I varnished the floors... and put in Tudor style beams so that its [the pub’s] origins were not forgotten... [Finally] I had the sign renewed and slightly changed the name of the place from... to ... as I felt it needed updating and this gave the pub a more authentic rural look whilst retaining some of its history and heritage” (former publican, 2011). The renovations that took place did ‘freshen’ and bring the pub into the twenty-first century, but some of what the publican was claiming to be authentic to the village pub was in fact inauthentic. For example, one arm bandits and pool tables are a relatively modern feature of the village pub. Thus, this publican, despite claiming to be knowledgeable of their pub’s history and heritage, was in actual fact lacking awareness. This point is not unique to this particular publican. The sorting process highlighted approximately 9 village newcomer respondents who lacked awareness of local and/or national history and heritage.

The work of Bourdieu (1984) can be seen to have some relevance to the above discussion on the gentrification of village pubs. Throughout *Distinction* the argument is made that cultural capital is concentrated in and used by the middle classes to impose their views of taste onto society; these views then become accepted by the lower classes as the recognised ‘norm’ (Bourdieu, 1984). According to Bourdieu (1984) aesthetic ideals and preferences can pass through the generations, creating and reinforcing distinctions. The gentrification of some village pubs it can be argued has functioned in this way. For example, by imposing their ideals of the rural and rural living onto the village pub some middle class newcomers have influenced how some, especially younger people, perceive the rural pub. These imposed ideals are, as seen throughout this thesis, not representative of how the rural ‘really’ is or how the working classes



have traditionally experienced the village pub. Thus the gentrification of the village pub by the middle classes has, in line with the above, functioned to create distinctions in society in which the middle class imagined experience is given preference over the lived working class experience.

Although some rural areas have witnessed processes of gentrification, it has not happened everywhere. Some villages have instead seen an overall decline in their population, with little or no 'new' blood (Shucksmith, 2000). Rural literature tends to suggest that remoteness and poor accessibility, as opposed to lack of village services, are the main factors behind this happening. This idea was also present in some of the interviews. For example, several participants remarked that better road links were a bigger factor than existing village service provision in their decision to inhabit a particular village. When villages are without the introduction of 'new' blood, it can be argued that the sustainability of any remaining village services as well as communities may be under threat, particularly if regular users of services or key members of the community have moved or passed away: 'My mother lived in Ewerby until her passing. During her 65 year stay there were very few new residents... she saw both the post office and shop close. I remember her saying the owners of the shop decided to close because of a dying population' (village resident, Billingham, 2010). Given the points raised in the above discussion on rural gentrification it can be argued that some of my findings support the views of Cloke (1994) and Bell (2006) outlined in chapter 3, namely that power and wealth is underpinning and perpetuating the rural idyll.

For Kingsnorth (2008) and Faulks (2008) the pub is embedded in and thus part of England's history, heritage and identity. According to Kingsnorth (2008), pubs and their signs provide us with a connection to the past and when they are lost so too is our link to that past. Selective coding and the comparative process found that some rural inhabitants hold similar views to those of Kingsnorth (2008). For example, a high

proportion of long-standing residents felt that the presence of a village pub allows them links back to their past as well as acting as a village signifier of local and national history (paraphrased and developed from Markham, 2013:270). This is worth exploring. The pub appearance, its name and sign are usually the first things we notice about a country or village pub and they shout ‘come in, all welcome’. This is often the same wherever and whichever country or village pub you venture into. Once inside, you are hard pressed not to notice some similarities between the one you are currently in and ones you frequented in the past, since the drinks served are more or less the same, as too is the overall, albeit in many instances superficial, atmosphere of unity amongst those inside. Although conversations can differ depending on which country or village pub you venture into, overall a degree of unity can be seen to occur amongst those inside, with friendly banter taking place either beside or over the bar. Although the pub is in itself important in maintaining a village’s identity, it is its appearance, its sign and name, which are the powerful carriers of historical meaning. Many residents recognise this and communities celebrate it: “The pub forms a major part of our village and always has done; that is why at the annual autumn feast, we [the community] make a point of displaying and highlighting its history within and beyond the village and its contemporary community” (village resident, Helpringham, 2010) (see Markham, 2011).

In 2008, the pub and the pint featured in the final nominations of the Icons of England project who defined icons as “important to life in England and the people who live here” (Icons of England, 2006 cited in Parker, 2012:42). This project was sponsored by the Government. Members of the public were asked to nominate what they regarded as an icon of England, and the final 100 nominations were chosen by the Icons of England committee who judged each public nomination by its relevance in terms of a set of criteria, which were as follows:

“[Icons are] symbolic: they represent something in our culture, history or way of life; are recognisable in a crowd (if no-one has heard of it or knows what it looks like, it cannot be an icon); are fascinating and surprising (they have hidden depths and unexpected associations); [and finally] icons are not people” (Icons of England.org.uk, cited in Parker, 2012:42-43).

This shows public recognition of the iconic nature of pubs. Furthermore, it helps to reinforce the notion that when a settlement sees one of more of its pubs close both the cultural value associated with the establishments and the cultural value they add are lost, impacting on the sustainability of a region’s and the nation’s history and heritage.

Whilst iconic, the pub, in England, can also be described as being, to some degree, a taken for granted institution. For many, whilst it is viewed as being firmly embedded in Britain’s history and heritage, it is also seen as being ‘just there’ and always will be. This view is naïve and erroneous. Although it has thus far stood the test of time, there is no guarantee that it will continue to do so indefinitely. Country and village pubs are declining in number, and each time one of these ceases to trade a little part of Britain’s heritage dies. It is, therefore, in England’s interest that country and village pubs are sustained. They form part of the English identity, as the quote of Belloc (1943, cited in Hutt, 1973) and the work of Orwell (1946) highlight. Culturally, their importance is perceived by some, including rural inhabitants, as paramount. For example, many rural inhabitants acknowledge the idea that village pubs are part of our popular culture. Furthermore, many continue to perceive the pub as a space that embodies social and cultural stability. There is no gimmick to the country or village pub, it is a simple concept but one with immense cultural history. The following case study provides a detailed example of how country and village pubs contribute to a

village's history and heritage and why rural inhabitants often see them as important in helping to maintain both village and national identity.

#### Case Study – Heckington

Heckington is a village in South Lincolnshire, located 5 miles from the market town of Sleaford off the A17. It is served by a multitude of services including a Co-operative food store, post office, pharmacy, butchers, newsagents, Chinese takeaway, Indian takeaway and DIY store. This village is also renowned for housing an eight sailed working windmill, the last in the country (Heckington Windmill, 2012). The windmill has been at the heart of Heckington since the early nineteenth century and continues to play a large role in helping to establish Heckington's identity (ibid). It is, however, not the only building to have local and national heritage attached to it. At the time of data collection, Heckington was served by two pubs: The Oak and the Nags Head. Since data collection, however, the village has seen a decline in the number of its pubs, and is now (2014) only served by the Nags Head. This is very different from previous centuries when the village housed ten pubs (Heckington Village Trust, 2011). In some respects each and every one of these has their own history and, collectively, they make up a large part of Heckington's heritage and identity. It is, however, the Nags Head which is now central in helping to maintain both the village and national identity.

The Nags Head is known and in some respects celebrated by many of its village residents: "Everybody's heard of Dick Turpin, it's lovely to know this village and one of its pubs has connections with such a character. Heckington will live on forever, in name if nothing else, because of this connection" (village resident, Heckington, 2011). The story goes that Dick Turpin resided at least overnight at the Nags Head (Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, 2002). It is hard to know whether this is fact or fiction. It is possible that it is fact, for he was convicted, at his trial in York, of

thieving a horse and its foal from Heckington common (ibid). Some residents, particularly long-standing ones, see local historical events as something that gives their village its identity and they are proud to be part of a village that is renowned for its history and heritage, particularly if it is related to a national figure, event or legend.

It was not always just the Nags Head which was central in helping to maintain both the village and national identity. The former Axe and Cleaver pub also had some important history and heritage attached to it. In the early part of the twentieth century, Heckington saw a revival in its Temperance movement. This came about as a result of an incident in the Axe and Cleaver; following an election, there was mockery towards the customers from the landlady regarding the results. In protest the customers pledged they would not consume alcohol for 12 months. Within a few days of making this vow more residents made the pledge. The news of this movement was disseminated locally and nationally, with headlines appearing in national newspapers and photographs in local shop windows (Heckington Village Trust, 2001). In the years which followed the Axe and Cleaver made a point of acknowledging the history that was attached to it: “The pub [Axe and Cleaver] closed in 1962, although I was only 24 I was aware of its history... with the temperance movement. The landlady made a point of displaying the newspaper clippings on the walls, at the time she said it helped give the pub its character... I found it all a bit odd but with hindsight I can see what she was getting at... it allowed people like me the chance to see that the place basked in... history” (village resident, Helpringham, 2011).

Temperance movements form a part Britain’s national history. Given the fact, and that the Axe and Cleaver explicitly disseminated its part in the revival of the local movement it can be argued that, when it closed, some local and national history became concealed from future generations. This became even more the case in the years which followed its closure. For example, where this pub once stood, there is now a residential

property, with no indication that it was a former drinking establishment. Consequently, the rich history attached to the property remains concealed other than to those with connections to the former pub or researchers and historians.

Whatever views one holds regarding alcohol and its consumption, it cannot be denied that country and village pubs continue to be seen, by many members of the general public, as special. Throughout history, although they have changed their appearance to remain sustainable, the basic premise has remained the same, namely, a social drinking establishment. At their core is the social, their whole demeanour is perceived, at least by the participants in this research, as facilitating socialisation. Village pubs do not need gimmicks. Gimmicks do not last long, and trade that is attracted by a gimmick is often short lived; as the novelty wears off, people become bored and seek pleasure and entertainment elsewhere (Hutt, 1973). Some pubs certainly do have a novelty factor attached to them. For example, since the early nineteenth century, the Beehive in Grantham (a rural market town) has had a sign that is a living beehive (Strangest Books, 2006). Nevertheless, it is still a pub and at its core remains a social function facilitated by the serving of food and drink. It is a reality that many village pubs do not get used as much as they once did but this has not stopped them from being perceived, at least by the rural inhabitants and connected actors featured in this research, as being socially and culturally integral to villages, communities and individuals.

In summary, both country and village pubs have been interpreted by the general public as being iconic features of the English countryside. In reality, there is no general agreement on what makes a village or a village pub. In both instances it is apparent that rural idyll representations on the part of newcomers and ‘realism’ (sometimes with flecks of nostalgia) on the part of long-standing residents have affected ideas of what

villages, village pubs and rural living are and should be like. Often these ideas contradict how the village pub and the rural are today. In relation to the country and village pub there is a lot of talk amongst the media, village residents and the population in general about how it fits into village life. There two ways in which the village pub can be experienced: the lived experience and the imagined experience. The former is associated with long-standing residents, whilst the latter resonates with newcomers. Media depictions tend to portray the imagined experience. Whilst long-standing residents are willing to challenge these portrayals many newcomers are not. Rather, they want to believe in the imagined experience. The imagined pub experience is tied up with the rural idyll and the village pub itself can evoke the rural idyll. Many newcomers have moved to the countryside with the intention of ‘improving’ it and its services to make it fit with their ideals of the rural and rural living. One way they have done this is by renovating the village pub. However, some of what they see to be traditional features are in fact relatively new. For example, physical facets such as the serving of food and social aspects such as family friendliness are modern innovations rather than ancient features of village pubs but many newcomers buy into the idea that they are part of a long historical tradition. It can therefore be concluded that, rather than a traditional village pub comprising facets dating back to medieval England, what many newcomers want, and thus seek out, are historical pub artefacts (name and signage) mixed with modern comforts of contemporary England. In doing this they reinforce their ideals of the village pub, help to project the imagined pub experience and recreate the rural idyll.

To conclude, whilst there has been an undeniable decline in the number of country and village pubs, they continue to hold cultural importance in the eyes of rural inhabitants. In other words, they continue to be seen as cultural icons and through their names, signage and appearance disseminate key events in Britain’s social, cultural and political history. Furthermore, they are seen to provide communities with a focal

gathering point that is also iconic. Taken together, village pubs are perceived by rural inhabitants to have a vital role in helping to maintain and sustain rural communities as well as preserving local and national history and heritage.



## Chapter 8 – Halting the decline of the village public house

Over the last decade and more it has been hard not to notice the accelerating decline in the number of village pubs. Even if not witnessed with one's own eyes, one will have certainly been made aware of this trend as a consequence of media dissemination and political rhetoric, e.g. through David Cameron's 'Big Society' concept. It is difficult to attribute this decline to any one cause (chapter 5 highlighted factors such as the behaviour of PubCos, changes in consumer behaviour and government policies). In rural areas at present (as stated in chapter 5) approximately four pubs per week cease to trade (CAMRA, 2012). The phenomenon of village pubs closing is nothing new. For example, more than four hundred parishes lost a pub during the first half of the 1990s (Pratten and Lovatt, 2002). What is different now, however, is the frequency of closure. This leads to the question of what can and should be done to try and halt the decline. This chapter, therefore, aims to explore the relevant measures and policies already in place, look at other measures and policies that rural inhabitants perceive could be taken, the likelihood of these measures coming into force, and the potential effect of these measures for village residents, communities and village pubs.

Before proceeding to address the main aims of this chapter, it is important to recognise there are three kinds of diversification relating to the village pub: economic, social and cultural diversification. Economic diversification can be defined as new policies and practices for the purpose of increasing economic value and includes measures such as the serving of food, or locating of another service into the vicinity or grounds of the village pub. Social diversification can be defined as new policies and practices for the purpose of increasing social value and includes measures such as the setting up of a pub co-operative as well as the setting up and running of clubs and societies (e.g. book club, local history society). And cultural diversification can be

defined as new policies and practices for the purpose of adding cultural value, and includes measures such as explicitly disseminating (through means such as visual displays of memories and artefacts) local and/or national history and heritage, and the serving of local speciality foods. Some diversification measures can involve more than one kind of diversification. For example, the setting up of a pub co-operative involves both social and economic diversification; the setting up of a history society involves social and cultural diversification and the serving of speciality food can involve both economic and cultural diversification.

The economic, social and cultural value of the village pub are interrelated, with one value impacting on another. Given this, any measure or policy to try to halt the decline in the number of village pubs needs to consider all these values. One of the schemes currently in place is 'Pub is the Hub', established in 2001 by the HRH The Prince of Wales. It is a non-profit organisation that provides advice on how to sustain a village pub, e.g. through diversification and obtaining funding to enhance the quality and range of their services (Pub is the Hub, 2012b). Thus Pub is the Hub supports and encourages a variety of individuals and collectives, including communities, publicans and local authorities to work together to retain village pubs. The aim of the scheme is purely to prevent the disappearance of the pub from the countryside. The scheme has helped a number of village pubs to diversify, in many instances by integrating an additional service such as a newsagent or convenience store into either the building of the pub, as an annex or as a separate building in the pub grounds.

In Lincolnshire the scheme has provided support to a number of village pubs to help ensure they are able to continue serving the local community. One such example is the Blacksmiths Arms in Rothwell. Here diversification into food was taken a step further than offering and selling food on the premises, by cooking and delivering hot school meals. This service serves five local primary schools and sends out on average

three hundred covers a day (Pub is the Hub, 2011). This project has had a far reaching positive impact. It is not only providing local school children with hot meals but also creating local employment and contributing to the turnover of the local economy. In addition, of course, it is helping to sustain the local pub itself. “One of the benefits of providing a school meals service has been increased ingredient purchasing for the business thus allowing the whole business to benefit from economies of scale...Being involved with such a project helps build upon the existing good name of the pub business...” (Pub is the Hub, 2011:1). It is not just the pub that benefits. Villages retain their local and thus communities continue to have a social gathering place and residents as well as visitors place of leisure.

Pub is the Hub is a national charity and has given support and guidance to numerous village pubs throughout the country. It is a testament to its importance that many of these pubs continue to prosper. One example is the Queens Head in Hawkedon, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Here the owners decided to attach a butchers shop to the pub premises. This project continues to be supported by Pub is the Hub, who initially provided some guidance on turning the owner’s idea into reality. Both enterprises have, over the last few years, gone from strength to strength in terms of customer numbers and customer loyalty. The produce and customer service provided by both services has gained a reputation as being of the highest quality, with the pub being voted CAMRA’s local pub of the year (Queens Head, Hawkedon, 2012).

Without input from sources such as Pub is the Hub it is doubtful whether the majority of such projects could get off the ground. For example, whilst individuals and communities can have ideas on ways to improve the viability of the village pub, if they have unrealistic expectations or do not have the knowledge of how to execute ideas, then their ideas are unlikely to come to fruition. All sorts of difficulties, including financial and those related to obtaining planning and building regulations can arise

when executing new ideas. A lack of experience or knowledge of how to deal with these difficulties can result in the project failing. Some publicans in this research when reflecting on their diversification ideas were aware of this. For example, one noted that if they had gone ahead with the idea of placing a shop in their pub they would have struggled to sustain the venture due to a lack of knowledge on how to implement the idea (former publican, Heckington, 2010).

Once materialised and embraced, projects such as the Queens Head, Hawkedon, can act to inspire and motivate other local enterprises and village communities. For example, if another entrepreneur or village community is able see the benefits of adopting non-conventional diversification methods then they may decide to follow suit. There are in the region of one hundred and fifty case study examples on the Pub is the Hub website (2013) highlighting the types and methods of diversification publicans across the country are using. Not all of these case studies are readily available to read, but the few that are (approximately 58) show the multi-faceted economic, social and cultural benefits pubs and their diversifications can bring to a variety of sources. It is difficult to gauge the extent to which these case examples are being drawn on by publicans and communities to guide their diversification methods, but it can be argued that more than at present could benefit. Approximately 12 participants for this research were oblivious to Pub is the Hub, and a further 5 including (at time of interview) a village publican were unaware of the types of project Pub is the Hub has supported. Given this, more publicity of Pub is the Hub and the regional pubs that have benefited from its support could help more communities and publicans to choose the right type and methods of diversification for their pub.

In Lincolnshire the Pub is the Hub scheme has been a catalyst for the retention and rejuvenation of some village pubs including the Red Lion in Mumby and the Prussian Queen in Saltfleetby. In both of these cases the scheme has offered guidance

and support to the proprietors regarding the attachment of a convenience store to the pub (Pub is the Hub, 2012c, Pub is the Hub, 2012d). It appears from media coverage given to these schemes that overall the schemes have been warmly received by a variety of sources including individual village residents, the village community and other service providers. This is not surprising as, in the examples given, it is, at least at local level, difficult to see a 'loser' in the situation. The proprietors are able to gain extra income contributing to the maintenance of a commercially viable business plan, the local economy benefits through the creation of additional employment and increased turnover, and services are retained, which has, as chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis have shown, important positive effects on the well-being of individuals, communities and villages.

There are, as shown throughout this thesis, examples of pubs locating another service either in the existing pub premises, attached as an annex or as a separate building in the pub car park. In a number of cases this additional service has been a post office or convenience store but there are many other examples (see Pub is the Hub website, 2013). In recent years there has been an increase in the number of microbreweries in rural and urban settlements. In some of these, such as the village of Heckington, the microbrewery is an entirely separate enterprise from the local pub, in both its ownership and its management. In others, however, the diversification strategy of some pubs has centred on providing the location for, or being involved with, the local microbrewery. Examples of this include The Masons Arms in Headington, Oxford, and the Watermill pub, Ings (see The Masons Arms, 2013; Watermill Inn, 2013). Many of these types of enterprise are located in market towns but they are becoming a more common feature of village settlements - see, for example, the Hesket Newmarket case study, discussed later in this chapter. There can be real benefits to this type of diversification. For example, customers are able to enjoy real ale. This in itself, as

highlighted in chapter 7, can be an attraction of a village pub. If pubs are attractive to consumers then their chances of remaining viable are seen by rural inhabitants as higher. If tours or a visitor's centre are attached to the microbrewery located in the grounds of the pub then it can be argued that the viability of the brewery and the pub increase further: "When you visit a microbrewery you have to sample the beer at the local, especially if it's [the pub] on-site... if you don't, it's like going to Cadburys world and not trying the chocolate, just plain wrong" (village resident, Ruskington, 2011). There can also, however, be disadvantages. As with any relationship there is the possibility of breakdown. If, for example, the two enterprises are owned or run by different people and the relationship between the owners becomes strained there can be implications for the viability of either business. In other words, if communication between owners breaks down or if tensions between the enterprises are evident enough to deter consumers from visiting the pub, then both the brewery and the pub stand to lose profit, potentially having an impact on their commercial viability and sustainability. Furthermore, this measure may be an attractive one to publicans but may not always be a viable one. A number of village pubs are owned by breweries and PubCos, and some tenanted publicans, such as a former publican from Horbling (2010), noted that although they liked the idea of an on-site microbrewery they believed that their PubCos would be against the idea on the basis it could cost them profit. It could be argued that if a microbrewery was attached or in the grounds of the village pub then in the long term the PubCos could reap dividends: "It's difficult to say if I would agree or disagree [to one of our pubs having an onsite microbrewery], there are pros and cons either way... I mean we could take a percentage of the profits and charge additional rent but at the same time it would be like shooting ourselves in the foot as we would be creating our own competition... PubCos on the other hand aren't breweries so they could potentially reap rewards from this measure..." (Batemans representative, 2013).

Although some villages have seen one service either incorporated into the pub or attached to the pub others have witnessed a collective approach to the retention of the pub. In Cherry Willingham, Lincolnshire, for example, Pub is the Hub provided information and support relating to the village pub becoming a community-run enterprise. A well-known PubCo is the owner, but until recently, there was no stability in terms of landlord/lady, but rather a constant changing of hands and periods of closure. After some initial discussions between relevant village bodies, e.g. the parish council and the owner, the community as a whole was given the opportunity to become lease-holders of the enterprise. Now the Cherry Tree is a community run pub with 43 locals involved and is going from strength to strength in terms of customer numbers and turnover profit (Pub is the Hub, 2012e). One of the positive outcomes of this venture has been the coming together of the community. Many village residents, for example, have not only embraced the project in spirit but have also contributed to the renovations internally and externally (ibid).

In general, reactions from residents in this research to the idea of village pubs becoming community-led are positive and welcoming: “If I was ever given the chance to be a stakeholder in my local I would accept in a heartbeat. I’m not a pub goer but I would become a stakeholder to ensure it [the pub] remains for those who rely on it for their social needs... also it is nice to see a village with a functioning pub, it makes a village and it gives it a feel of warmth and comfort, a homeliness feeling” (village resident, Bardney, 2011). Such a statement highlights once again the social and cultural importance of the village pub, to some rural inhabitants, and how it has become synonymous with the identity of the village *per se*. In addition, it reveals some of the feelings and perceptions people have about local services and their impact on the feel of a village. There have been many instances throughout this research where references have been made to a connection between the demeanour of a village, in terms of its

overall feel, and village services: “Once a village loses its services, it’s boring, no life, just an empty shell” (village resident, Thorpe Latimer, 2010).

It is, however, hard to disentangle perceptions from reality. In particular it is hard to be sure whether the closing of village services directly changes the feel of a village. For example, it can be put forward that it is the people and the community that give a village its welcoming and homely feel and that services merely allow for easier facilitation of this. Hence, when a service closes it can become harder, but not impossible, to retain the same atmosphere as when the service was open.

The words used by many participants to describe village services are fascinating. On many occasions they explicitly identified a service as belonging to them. Replies such as ‘my’ local or ‘our’ newsagent can be interpreted in such a way as to highlight and reinforce the cultural conditioning to believe, that villages and services, such as the pub, shop, post office and church, are intertwined, meaning that a village as a collective has some kind of ownership of the services and thus villagers should be entitled have some say on their future. In reality, however, there has been little guidance and support to enable villagers to have a real and active say in the future of their village services. Schemes such as Pub is the Hub, therefore, can be seen as a vital lifeline because they provide knowledge and support to those who want to rejuvenate or retain a village pub but until now, for a variety of reasons, have not been able to do so.

Community-led, community owned and co-operative pubs are becoming a more common feature of rural localities. For example, in the late 1990s, the village of Reach, East Cambridgeshire, saw its pub become community owned after the long-standing landlord attempted, to no avail, to sell the establishment (Countryside Agency, 2001). The villagers of Reach attribute their inspiration and motivation for their decision to set up and run Dyke’s End to the success of another community owned pub in Abington Pigots, Cambridgeshire (ibid). This raises an important point for it highlights that the



actions of one community can encourage other village communities to become involved in the rejuvenation or retention of their village services including the pub. This idea is confirmed by the following quote: “When I read about pubs like the Butchers Arms in Cumbria and how it was saved by the community pulling together it gives me hope that should my local be threatened with closure we [the community] have options and can save it” (village resident, Ruskington, 2012).

The Butchers Arms is in the village of Crosby Ravensworth, Cumbria, this pub became a co-operative in 2011 and has 300 stakeholders (BBC News Cumbria, 2011, The Sunday Telegraph, 2011). The main difference between this and some other community owned pubs across the country is that its story has received national recognition. It has, for example, been hailed by the local community, Prime Minister David Cameron and the media “as an example of the Big Society in action” (The Butchers Arms, 2013, website: no page number). As a consequence, of its media attention this pub has enabled the idea of pub co-operatives to be brought to the attention of village residents, some of whom may not have been aware that communities could form a pub co-operative.

Co-operative village pubs are a fairly new concept so it is hard to assess their long term impact on villages and communities. Superficially they can seem to be an attractive means to address the decline in the number of village pubs. There are, for example, potential social, cultural and economic benefits for individuals, communities, and villages. Individual and community networks can be maintained or strengthened and villages are able to keep an iconic part of their identity. Furthermore, stakeholders (who are often village residents too) are able to gain transferable skills such as business management and leadership (Borzaga and Spear, 2004 cited in Cabras, 2013). This can enhance, first, their own personal career potential and second, the sustainability of their

co-operative. Both of these enhancements can aid the growth of local and national economies.

Co-operative pubs tend to operate as community benefit societies (see Cabras, 2013). In other words the interests of the community are put before that of members and shareholders (Parliament, 2010). One of the main features of co-operatives that operate in this way is that they are able to install an asset lock which prevents the selling of the enterprise and the sharing of proceeds among shareholders of the society (Cabras, 2011). This feature is one which makes community benefit society co-operatives an attractive option for rural communities seeking to retain their country and village pubs. Another feature which makes co-operative ownership an attractive option for village communities is that power is distributed equally amongst shareholders irrespective of how many shares they hold, thus no-one shareholder is able to override the views of the others (Cabras, 2011; 2013). This feature can make the difference between a co-operative being successful or unsuccessful.

The make-up of the shareholder members is another factor which can impact on the success of a co-operative. The work of Craig (1980, cited in Cabras, 2013) highlights that different categories of shareholder member can exist. Broadly speaking, there are three such categories: activists (which Cabras, 2013, refers to as 'organised'), who tend to be actively involved and a driving force behind the sustainability of a co-operative pub; supporters (Cabras, 2013, refers to these as 'enthusiasts') who tend to be supporters of the activists; and customers, who tend to be principally concerned with self-interest (e.g. keeping the pub open so they have a place to frequent). If a co-operative pub has both activist and supporter groups, then, as the case study below shows, it is more likely to be sustainable.

The following case study provides an example of a co-operative pub:

### Case Study - Heskett Newmarket

In spring 2003, the Old Crown in Heskett Newmarket, Cumbria became a co-operative (Old Crown website, 2012). This was the second co-operative in this village; the brewery was the first (see Heskett Newmarket Brewery, 2013). Although these co-operatives operate differently in terms of management and general day to day running, they both continue to be successful and viable both socially and economically. What is more, they remain closely linked to one another with the brewery providing some of the beer to the pub. This case study, whilst making reference to the brewery, will focus on the pub (for an overview of the brewery co-operative see Cabras, 2011). During the foot and mouth outbreak in the early 2000s the Old Crown suffered a down turn in custom and was at risk of becoming commercially unviable. Faced with this prospect the then owners decided to put the establishment on the market (Old Crown website, 2012). There was no interest and, as a result, a meeting by village residents was called, whose outcome was the creation of a co-operative; which owns the pub (Cabras, 2011). The Old Crown is leased to tenants and within the lease it is stipulated that produce for the pub, as far as is possible, should be purchased from local suppliers and that, should tenants wish to change the establishment structurally, they must obtain permission from the committee of the co-operative (ibid). Since being taken over as a co-operative the Old Crown has gone from being a business in decline to a business that is thriving. According to the Old Crown website (2012), the aspiration of the current tenants is very much in line with their shareholders' ethos, which is to ensure the pub remains a place "where locals, regulars and visitors will all feel equally welcome and at home" (Old Crown website, the history page, 2012). The Old Crown prides itself on being a friendly pub, which makes new and old customers feel welcome and happy in a relaxed atmosphere where good quality food and real ale is sold (ibid).

Although schemes such as ‘Pub is the Hub’ and measures such the creation of village co-operatives may contribute to the rejuvenation and retention of village pubs they cannot make publicans or communities initially commit to the cause. Even when they do commit it is no easy option. It requires motivation, commitment and determination of all involved for the project to succeed. Often minor constraints pale in comparison to the opportunities available to ensure the long term viability of enterprises and communities. However, on occasions, initial commitment by service providers and communities is lacking. This can be for a variety of reasons including lack of business knowledge, poor infrastructure, lack of financial capital or lack of time, as detailed in Great Hale case study, chapter 6. One former village publican in South Lincolnshire, for example, had the opportunity in the mid-2000s to diversify into home delivery of services and products such as fresh fruit and vegetables but elected not to, citing too much hassle to implement than they wanted (former publican, Helpringham, 2011). This attitude is not unusual. The constant comparison of collected publican data showed that, unless publicans, particularly newcomers, are able to see a quick and direct return on their investments, they are reluctant to diversify into niche markets: “We are a business not a charity or social organisation, I’m here to make money not friends or acquaintances” (former publican, Horbling, 2010). This comes back to the discussion relating to Pub is the Hub case studies. If publicans and communities are able to see the bigger, longer term advantages of adopting niche measures then they may be more willing to diversify into these markets. This, however, may be inhibited by other factors, including financial outlay to set up the project.

Whilst publicans need to be mindful that their pub is a business, if they are too self-interested (e.g. relentless pursuit of profit), then they risk attenuating the social and cultural value of the establishment, which can then impact on its sustainability. This in itself raises the question of the purpose of a country and/or village pub.

The constant comparison of publican data and memos found that village publicans tend to hold one of two types of attitude when it comes to the purpose of the village pub and that the type of view they hold is, to a degree, related to the type of resident they are (i.e. long-standing or newcomers). Publicans who are long-standing residents tend to see the pub as being three dimensional, that is they see its role as being economic, social and cultural: “You have to understand a pub isn’t just an economic venture, it’s also a social one... pubs by their very nature can enhance residents’ social lives and I feel I have a responsibility to adopt some practices such as a book club which result in a higher social return for residents over an economic return for me” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). In contrast to long-standing residents, publicans who are village newcomers often see the purpose of the village pub as money oriented. In this respect the social and cultural functions are seen as a consequence of the economic function.

One finding to emerge from the constant comparison of data from different sources (interview data, CRC literature) was the notion that some village residents perceive tourism to be a way forward for the sustainability of the village pub: “If we [the village] had more clubs and put on more events then I think more people would visit the area and use our pub and shop” (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). CRC (2010) make the argument that settlements with a larger population are more likely to: run a higher number of leisure and recreational activities; retain commercial services; and attract new social and commercial niche enterprises such as internet cafes (CRC, 2010). It can, however, be argued that some larger villages, such as Navenby in Lincolnshire (see chapter 6), whilst developing and expanding their service repertoire to include antique and travel shops along with leisure activities such as tennis, gardening, bowls, and skittles, have lost some of their more traditional services including the post office: “Yes we have lost the post office, which is a shame, but we have gained an

antique centre and tea room... admittedly a lot local people used the post office but we have to move with the times, tourism is where the money is now. I think our services have changed to reflect this and the diversity of our village..." (local service provider also village resident, Navenby, 2011). This belief that tourism is the 'pinnacle' of the rural economy, however, can be questioned. Some rural areas such as Cumbria and the Chilterns can be described as 'honey pot' locations, i.e. areas renowned for drawing in tourist trade. As a consequence, they have an economy that reflects this, but areas where tourism is not as important do not. In Lincolnshire, for example, agriculture continues to be prominent in the local economy, and tourism and retail, whilst growing, do not predominate (see Lincolnshire Research Observatory, 2009). In the coming decades, tourism and retail may feature more heavily in the local economy of Lincolnshire. For example, over the last few years local councils have made a conscious effort to disseminate what Lincolnshire has to offer and what makes it different from other areas of the country, in a bid to attract tourists to the area (see South Kesteven District Council, 2013; Visitor Guide, 2013). Due to the large area of fertile land in the county, however, it is unlikely that retail and tourism will ever be as prominent as agriculture and horticulture.

Many publicans are fully aware that they are unable to compete with supermarket prices when it comes to alcohol: "These days if your pub is to survive you have to adapt your business and try new ideas... you have to offer something supermarkets don't, otherwise you will go under" (former publican, Keal Coats, 2010). One practice that is gaining popularity amongst village pubs is bartering. In 2008, The Pigs Pub in Edgefield, Norfolk, started to trade pints for fresh local produce which they could use on their menu; successful examples of barter included a pint for a brace of pheasants or a pint for some free range hens' eggs (Gammell, 2008). Bartering is not really new; it has been practised for many years. According to one village resident,

whose mother had experience of bartering with a local farm (apple and pears for milk, butter or cheese), it was popular during World War Two (village resident, South Kyme, 2010). The report by Gammell (2008) shows that bartering has been embraced and is having a positive impact on pub owners and customers alike. In Lincolnshire, however, there has, as the case study below shows, been both positive and negative reaction to this measure.

#### Case Study – Bassingham

Bassingham is a village situated between Lincoln and Newark on Trent. It hosts a variety of services including a school, post office, grocery shop and two pubs: The Bugle Horn and The Five Bells. In 2010 the Bugle Horn started to use a bartering system where residents are able to exchange either their services, surplus goods or a mix of both for drinks (BBC News Online, 2010a, Foottit, 2010). This system was not planned but came about by chance: “When we came to the pub there were problems with the boiler... we just mentioned it to a customer one day who got this friend to have a look. He fixed it for free when it would have cost about £100, so we repaid him with 10 gin and tonics. It’s just taken off from there” (pub licensee, cited in Foottit, 2010, web page). The publicans and many customers have hailed the system a success, with both the pub and the customers benefiting (ibid). Its attractiveness is understandable. If a customer wants but cannot afford to visit their local and they have surplus of, for example, vegetables from their allotment, or (during shooting season) pheasants, they can exchange them, if the publicans agree for a drink. As a consequence, the customer is able to enjoy something that they may not have been able to do without the system being in place, and thus enhance their social well-being. At the same time the publicans can also benefit: “At cost price, two drinks will be around £2.20, but four pheasants

makes eight portions of casserole, which we sell for £8 each...We make a profit so it is a win-win situation” (pub licensee, cited in Foottit, 2010, web page).

When this system works for both parties, it is clear that different positives can be yielded for different people. When it does not work, however, one or both parties can feel the effects. For example, there is the potential for one party to feel offended or be taken advantage of: "I could never barter in the pub, I get very easily offended and if the barter was declined I would take it personally and doubt I would want to visit again, barter or no barter" (village resident, Navenby, 2010). This is just one person's view but it shows that there could be drawbacks to this type of system. This was confirmed by another research participant who remarked that he felt hurt and no longer visits the pub, not because his barter of tomatoes was rejected (due to the pub having a surplus) but because after his rejection another customer's barter of tomatoes was accepted (village resident, Leasingham, 2010). In this case, a failure to barter had a negative impact on the individual's well-being. In addition, there was a loss of trade for the pub and a loss of respect for the publican. If either of these were to become more widespread, the pub might struggle to remain sustainable. For this reason, caution needs to be exercised if a pub is considering or adopting the practice of bartering.

Bartering is just one measure the Bugle Horn has embraced. At the time of writing, this pub was in the process of trying to make use of social diversification, by setting up a village football team and village book club (BBC News Online, 2010a). By integrating with and embracing different groups of the community, it can be argued, this village pub is attempting to market itself beyond its already established customer base and this increases its chances of remaining sustainable.

Over the course of time consumer tastes and preferences change, certain leisure pursuits become more popular while others decline substantially. For example, in the



1950s, dance halls were a major staple of many people's social lives (British Pathé, 2012). Pubs, to some degree, are fortunate for, whilst customer numbers have fallen and there has been a continued decline in their importance (see chapter 4), they have continued to retain an appeal amongst different sections of society. They have, however, had to endure competition from a variety of alternative leisure pursuits (Elwood-Williams, 1996; Pratten and Lovatt, 2002) including the cinema and more novel activities such as paintballing. In general, pubs have tried to fight back by diversifying into the retailing of food. Village pubs, in particular, have used the advertising of local home cooked food to draw in extra patrons. They have also made use of other attractions such as quiz nights to continue to sell the village pub as a leisurely and relaxing respite from the pressures of work and everyday life.

It is important that tenants and landlords continue to diversify and never become complacent about either the competition they face from other social and commercial enterprises or the tastes and preferences of the consumer. To this end, it is important that they take note of customers' wishes and adapt their business accordingly: "Some village pubs have gone all fancy, tried to make themselves something they're not – they're false. I want a village pub to be real in atmosphere with good English food and real ale" (village resident, Bardney, 2011). In recent years some tenants and landlords have used cultural diversification as means to reinforce the 'history' of their establishment and aid its sustainability. This is seen with the following case study on South Kyme, Lincolnshire.

#### Case Study – South Kyme

South Kyme is a village situated between Sleaford and Boston. It has a small but stable population. In 2011 the adult population was approximately 351 (North Kesteven District Council, 2011). Presently, it has two local services, one of which is the pub. Since the millennium this village has seen its public transport cut and its pub go through

brief periods of closure before reopening, under new management (village resident, South Kyme, 2010). Many residents and a former publican perceived the pub to have economic, social and cultural value and came together to embrace these values: “Pubs have a long history, each pub has its own story. I wanted to celebrate the history of the Hume Arms so I told a few regulars of my plan and within a few days I had people coming in offering their support” (former publican, South Kyme, 2010). Initially the project took the form of displaying (in written and artefact format) the history, stories, and memories of the pub by residents and pub users. As the project developed, however, the then publican added one-off and timely exhibition displays, the first of which corresponded with Armistice Day and celebrated the villages’ war dead (former publican, South Kyme 2010). The addition of these exhibition displays was important, as it kept the momentum of the project alive. For example, by adding in additional displays or stories by different people the pub was keeping the project from going stale and offering residents and tourists the opportunity to consume more history and heritage: “What I like about this pub is you get people popping in on the off chance the displays have changed... he [the publican] never says when he’s going to alter them, he just does it; I think that’s great, it means I get see and chat to those who never normally venture into the pub” (village resident, South Kyme, 2010). This shows that, in addition to extending the cultural value of the pub, the changing of displays stimulates the social value of the establishment. This idea was confirmed by another participant who started to visit the pub only after hearing about the displays and now considers her social life to be more fulfilled as a result (village resident, South Kyme, 2011). The publican of the Hume Arms, by stimulating the cultural and social value of the pub, saw an increase in the amount of economic value produced. For example, following the displays there was an overall increase in pub number visitors; with extra custom being generated with the timely exhibitions. This extra custom however was not always converted into extra

regulars (former publican, South Kyme, 2010). The economic value that is produced, as a consequence of stimulating the social and cultural value of the establishment and local area, can extend beyond the publican and their profits. To cater for extra customers, the Hume Arms had to employ additional staff (ibid). Furthermore, because of a higher customer demand for meals, the pub began carrying out more, regular and higher monetary value transactions with other businesses. This is shown by the fact the publican in order to cater to demand was having to go to the market to buy produce several times a week as opposed to just the once before the project started (ibid). The Hume Arms also tapped into its regional culture, by the type of food it retailed. For example, it served regional specialities such as Lincoln red cattle and Lincolnshire sausage. The use of these, it can be argued, helped strengthen the Hume Arms' image as one of embeddedness within Lincolnshire rurality. For example, customers have not only been engaged with the lived history of a Lincolnshire village but have been able to consume some of the county's known 'home' food produce. This highlights that the stimulation of the cultural and social value of pubs can aid the commercial viability of not only the pub but other businesses in the locality and region, impacting upon their sustainability and perhaps that of the regional and even national economy.

The Hume Arms is now under different management and has changed its name simply to the Hume. It remains to be seen whether the current publican will embrace previously adopted cultural diversification measures – at the time of writing there is no indication that they will. This shows the case study in a different light, namely that some diversification measures are fragile and dependent on the innovativeness of a single individual.

Cultural diversification is taking place in other areas of the country too. In January 2013, for example, the Prince of Wales pub in Kenfig (supported by Pub is the

Hub) installed a digital and interactive touch screen where customers are able to find out about and engage with the history and heritage of the pub and the area in which it is located (Perrett, 2013). Cultural diversification clearly has benefits: it can (as shown in the South Kyme case study) stimulate the social and the economic value of village pubs as well as enhance their cultural value. Part of the success of the Hume Arms, South Kyme, has been good relations between the publican, customers and village residents. By listening to customers and engaging with locals this pub diversified so as to: first, fill a void in the market place by providing a place to disseminate local history and heritage; and second, offer residents and tourists the opportunity to enjoy a different side to the pub. Without good customer relations, it is doubtful whether the Hume Arms would have enjoyed the commercial success that followed its cultural diversification: “[I] gained so many customers by displaying and celebrating the history of the pub and local area... I couldn’t have done it without the help of other residents, they’ve provided me with knowledge, artefacts and support. Together we make a good team” (former publican, South Kyme, 2010). This quote highlights that good customer relations are vital: locals can make or break services. This idea was confirmed during the sorting of memos and encapsulated by a village resident who noted that their decision to use the pub over the supermarket was based on their preference for the personal (e.g. welcoming and friendly atmosphere) over the impersonal and that if the personal element disappeared then so too would their custom (village resident, Ruskington, 2010). Given that diversification and good customer relations are key ingredients for the sustainability of village pubs, it can be interpreted as surprising that some pubs, such as the one featured on the BBC Wales (2011) documentary (see chapter 6), are turning down opportunities. It has to be acknowledged, however, as shown in the Navenby case study (chapter 6), not all opportunities being offered are what they appear to be and in fact are not always viable. Thus communities and publicans need to be aware of the

wider economic, social and cultural terrain which surrounds their village pub and adapt their diversification strategies accordingly. If they are not prepared to do this, cannot accept the prospect of change or fail to respond to opportunities, then it may be appropriate for them to reassess why they are running a village pub.

If village pubs are to survive and villages retain their services then we as individuals, communities and as a country must accept different types of diversification and diversification measures. Publicans are able to gain advice and support from Pub is the Hub and implement different types of diversification measures, but they obviously cannot force people through the pub doors. Furthermore, what is a realistic achievement for one village publican may not be achievable for another. Thus, whilst individual publicans can look to other diversified pubs across the country for motivation and encouragement they need to understand that they might not be able to realistically achieve the same outcomes, due to differences in, for example, local economies, main types of custom (tourist, local residents) and their own business skills. It is, therefore, important that publicans do not jump 'head first' into a diversification measure but assess its potential beforehand, for example, by reflecting on their own business skills and the wider economic, social and cultural features of the area where their pub is situated.

Should publicans find that their own business knowledge is lacking or that they do not have the skills or confidence required to implement suitable and sustainable diversification measures then they can seek the advice of schemes such as 'Pub is the Hub'. The constant comparison of publican data, and the use of Goffman's (1959) work to help make sense of how publicans present themselves front stage to customers, highlighted that although some may be aware that they lack business skills they are ambivalent about seeking help through fear of their weaknesses being exposed. This suggests that the performance acted out by some publicans encompasses elements such

as presenting an idealised image of themselves (e.g. knowledgeable, experienced and successful in running pubs), maintaining this idealised image, and misrepresenting their business skills (Goffman, 1959). It can be argued that this type of performance may have negative implications for the sustainability of village pubs. For example, if publicans have presented themselves as being more knowledgeable or skilled than they really are and are not willing to ask for help when they need it, because they fear it will jeopardise the performance they have acted out, they may be risking the commercial viability of their pub, which in turn can affect its sustainability. This fear of exposure and of being seen by others as not the person they have presented themselves to be recurred several times during the substantive coding of publican interviews. Approximately 5 mentioned that they recognised Pub is the Hub as a source of help, but did not want to contact them through fear of being seen by village residents as incompetent. This perception is, however, misguided. Village residents are more likely to respect the publican if they admit they need help and act on advice given: “I can understand why some publicans don’t like asking for help... to them it’s a sign of personal weakness but to me and other residents it shows their commitment and strength. I mean by asking for help they are putting the community over and above their own pride and to me that speaks volumes about the person” (village resident, Billingham, 2010). It can be concluded, therefore, that publicans who recognise they do not know how to implement diversification measures need to contact schemes like Pub is the Hub. If they do not then they risk more than their personal pride being dented: they risk losing their pub, and with it the respect of the residents of their village.

Communities, as shown in the Hesket Newmarket case study, can play a vital role in preventing a village pub from closing and/or help aid its sustainability through engaging with and running, with the publican’s agreement, clubs and societies in the establishment. However, the extent to which a particular village community can be

relied upon to halt the decline of the village pub can be questioned. Not all communities are as pro-active as the one detailed in the Hesket Newmarket case study. Furthermore, even where a village has a very pro-active community, motivation can, as shown in chapter 6, wane. Community members who were once pro-active can become less involved and, if nobody fills that void or if other members become ‘down and defeated’ in their attitude, their outlook and commitment to the goal of saving their local can change. This was the experience of one village resident who remarked that an attempt to save the pub in his previous village of residence failed once key members of the community were, due to death, illness or lack of time, unable to commit to the cause (village resident, Metheringham, 2011). This shows the fragility of some communities and the dependence on one or two individuals when it comes to saving village services. The analysis of newcomer data found that, in general, this group perceived long-standing residents as being more active in saving the village pub. Several village newcomers, for example, whilst acknowledging that they supported village attempts to save pubs, claimed not to offer, due to time and knowledge constraints, the same level of commitment as long-standing residents. This perception could be mistaken, because the majority of the long-standing residents in this research were retired, with more time on their hands, but were not necessarily more committed. However, long-standing residents are perhaps likely to be more committed to the survival of village services generally. This is a point that further rural research could address and clarify. Given the discussion in this paragraph and chapter 6 it can be concluded that, whilst communities can play a role in halting the decline of the village pub, the extent to which they can be relied upon is dependent on factors such as the commitment of one or two villagers to motivate and encourage other residents to become involved, or the balance in numbers between long-standing and newcomer residents. For example, if the latter significantly

outweigh the former then, whilst the desire to save the village pub may still be strong, the active campaigning may not.

Individuals, communities and service providers including publicans can work together to try and halt or reverse the decline in the village pub, but it can be argued that they could be helped in their cause by local authorities. There could, for example, be fewer viable pubs lost if mandatory viability tests, such as the model provided by CAMRA (2005), were in place. Viability tests can help publicans, communities and authorities see if a pub is viable or not. Consequently, they can help to support or refute any arguments being put forward by owners and developers regarding a specific pub's viability and possible change of building usage (Muir, 2009).

There is one factor, however, that participants in this research perceived could work against this, namely the behaviour of PubCos. PubCo practices such as restrictive covenants and the beer-tie were perceived by some rural inhabitants and former publicans as negatively impacting on the sustainability of village pubs. Restrictive covenants (used by PubCos when selling their pubs to prevent them becoming a pub again, Muir, 2009) were mentioned by 5 participants (3 village residents and 2 former publicans) who believed that they were contributing to the decline in number of village pubs. Amongst these 5 participants there was a general feeling of resentment towards PubCos who use restrictive covenants. It is understandable why some residents feel this way. For example, in their view they have not only lost their pub and the value it adds to them but they have also lost the prospect that their local could become a local again, impacting on the way they experience the rural.

CAMRA (2013) has long campaigned for the prohibition of restrictive covenants by PubCos. This persistence, it can be argued, has had some effect. It appears that the government has taken stock of complaints regarding PubCo practices, and is wanting to introduce a statutory code of conduct for PubCos, which promotes and



encourages fair business practices (see *Fair Deal for Your Local*, 2013; CAMRA, 2013). Recently, some of the large PubCos have announced that they will no longer use restrictive covenants (CAMRA, 2013). Nevertheless, a statutory code of conduct may be the best way to ensure that PubCos no longer place restrictive covenants on their pubs.

Many village pubs, since 1989, have been owned by PubCos and leased to tenants (see chapter 4). The former PubCo publicans featured in this research often felt aggrieved by the way in which their PubCo operated: “My PubCo has me over a barrel whatever way you look at it, high rates, the beer-tie... they even take a whacking percentage of the takings from the games machines” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). Underlying some of the grievances former publicans had towards their PubCo was the idea that PubCos do not listen to their tenants. This was the experience of one former publican who reported that he lost custom as a result of his PubCo not listening to his reservations and compromise suggestions regarding the installation of two giant LCD TVs (former publican, Horbling, 2010). It is, to some degree, understandable why PubCos make use of the beer-tie and insist on the installation of technology, because at the end of the day they are commercial companies. Thus, if a practice or policy is seen to increase profitability, it can often be rolled out throughout the entire suite of pubs (see Hutt, 1973). The issue with this, at least for some of the former PubCo publicans featured in this research, is that village pubs are often in keeping not only with the area in which they are located but also with the age when they were built, and their character inside and outside often reflects this. Thus to change them without considering how it would impact on the surrounding area and on regular and loyal customers is problematic.

In the experiences of the former publicans (freehold and PubCo) interviewed as part of this research, there was a general view that PubCos hold tremendous power over

their tenants and that is to the detriment of the sustainability of village pubs: “If the beer-tie was relaxed, then my stress levels would plummet, I could spend time with customers and devise strategies to try and widen who uses my pub... I could focus more of my attention on running some social events with an indirect slow but steady [profit] return, rather than the ‘wham bam thank you mam’ strategies I am, at present, forced to adopt” (former publican, Heckington, 2010). There were several ways in which former publicans perceived PubCo power over tenants could be lessened: a statutory code of conduct and greater transparency (see Muir, 2009). In relation to a statutory code of conduct there was a perception amongst some of the former publicans featured in this research that this would provide greater clarity to tenants on the responsibilities and proper practice of both themselves and their PubCo. This measure has recently featured in the 2014 Queens Speech (Cabinet Office, 2014). This shows that the Government is aware of the concerns surrounding PubCo behaviour and is willing to challenge their current policies and practices. The establishing of a statutory code could encompass or facilitate the second way in which, publicans perceive, PubCo power over tenants could be reduced, namely greater transparency (see Muir, 2009). If there was greater market transparency on pub rents, wholesale prices, the extent of the beer-tie and other stipulations (e.g. the percentage PubCos take from entertainment amenities) then existing and prospective tenants would be more knowledgeable about costs and turnover. This in turn would enable them to make more informed decisions regarding matters such as the most appropriate type of diversification and diversification measures for the sustainability of their village pub.

Whilst a statutory code of conduct and greater transparency may aid the sustainability of some village pubs it is imperative that they are enforced by an independent body or the government to ensure compliance. In a similar manner to the introduction of mandatory viability tests, it will take time for a statutory code and

greater transparency to be implemented and enforced, should they be adopted. This, however, should not dissuade publicans and communities from continuing to voice their concerns about current practices as this keeps the momentum of possible reforms alive and acts as a reminder that change is needed if the village pub is to survive. Communities and publicans, however, need to be realistic about the fact that reforms are unlikely to materialise in the very near future. Consequently, they need to continue diversifying as far as they can, within the constraints they have, in order to retain and draw in extra customers. They must be willing to accept and embrace different types of diversification (economic, social and cultural) and diversification measures. If they are unwilling to do this then they face the prospect that their business may become commercially unviable, resulting in eventual closure.

It is not just a change in PubCo behaviour, diversification measures and the introduction of mandatory viability tests that participants in this research believe could aid the sustainability of the village pub. Approximately 42 interviewees mentioned a long term freezing or reduction of beer tax as a way to aid communities and publicans sustain the village pub: “I’m not saying it’s the Government’s responsibility to save village pubs but I do think they could help... I mean and that would be a massive bonus to the pubs” (village resident, Navenby, 2010). The remainder of this chapter will focus on examining reducing beer tax as a means to aid the sustainability of village pubs, before summing up and concluding.

Beer tax has been a continuous issue for many decades. There are two types of taxation on alcohol, namely value added tax (VAT) and excise duty. VAT, until recently, has tended to remain constant at 17.5%. This was however dropped in 2008 to 15% and was subsequently increased to 20% in January 2011 (HMRC, 2013). Excise duty is changeable and has tended to increase on a year by year basis. The two main intentions of excise duty on alcohol over the decades have been to pay for the social and

health costs associated with the consumption of alcohol and to reduce overall alcohol consumption (Leicester, 2011). Price is a major determinant of how much alcohol individuals purchase and consume (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2007e). Given the high costs to bodies such as the NHS and the police in dealing with the consequences of alcohol consumption, it is logical and, to some degree, understandable why alcohol would be taxed. However, the raising, lowering or freezing of tax does need to take account of possible effects (e.g. possible increased or decreased trade and the economic repercussions of this) on, particularly, the smaller businesses involved in the retailing of alcohol as this could have implications for the stimulation and growth of local and national economies.

It is the excise duty on alcohol that CAMRA and many participants in this research (residents and publicans), would like to see frozen for the foreseeable future. Between 2008 and 2012 there was a steep increase in beer tax; it has, according to CAMRA (2012), risen by 42 per cent. This is bound to have an impact on consumer spending, especially given the economic recession. According to CAMRA (2012, cited in Hampson, 2012), the high price of alcohol in pubs is a major deterrent for young people. This is also true, however, for older people: “I don’t use the village pub anymore, it’s too expensive, it’s cheaper for me to get some drinks from Tesco and have my friends round or go into town to places like Toby Carvery for lunch” (village resident, Helpringham, 2010). In the March 2013 Budget, the Coalition Government decided to knock a penny off the price of beer. This led to some people, including village residents, making the assumption that their village pub would now be ‘safe’ from closure: “I’m riding high, I can’t see my local closing now, I’m sure it [the penny a pint reduction] will lead to more people visiting the pub and spending more” (follow-up interview, village resident, Heckington, 2013). Although this resident saw this policy as positive, some other participants saw it as just a token gesture and thus would not

help to sustain the village pub: “It’s a stupid gesture really, I mean a month before the budget, my PubCo put its prices up 2.1%, meaning I had to increase mine, meaning that a pint won’t be any cheaper than it was in January... to make a difference there would need to be something like a five pence reduction on all [alcoholic] drinks not just beer” (publican, anonymous, 2013).

To sum up and conclude this chapter: if village pubs are to survive, there needs to be motivation, commitment and determination from communities, pub owners (free hold and PubCos) and tenants. The Pub is the Hub scheme is supporting communities and individuals who want to see their local pub survive but there are still numerous pubs throughout the country which are struggling to remain commercially viable. There are measures such as diversification, mandatory viability tests and a lessening of PubCo power (namely, through a statutory code of conduct and greater transparency) which could be considered and introduced to try and ensure village pubs remain in the long term. It is, however, unlikely that one measure in isolation will be sufficient and it will require a long term commitment from PubCos, publicans and communities to implement a package of measures in a stepped approach that considers the wider social, economic and cultural environment of the time and is extremely flexible.

## Chapter 9 – Conclusion

When one embarks on a grounded theory study one does not know how long it will take, where data collection will lead or the amount of data needed. What is more, there is no guarantee that a theory will emerge from data. As a consequence it can feel as if one is entering the unknown and in some respects this is true. In this case, as there was very little direct literature on this topic, it would have been difficult to create testable hypotheses. Thus, it was decided to take a different approach, which lent itself to theory generation. Throughout this research the prospect of not knowing whether a rich integrated theory would be the end product was overwhelming but this became a distant feeling as the research progressed and a theory started to emerge. This chapter draws out the key points from each of the findings chapters, before going on to reflect on the main themes from the thesis and concluding. In order to do this the chapter first summarises the contextualisation chapters (excluding methodology) and highlights how they have provided the extant knowledge needed for my research findings and contribution to knowledge.

The literature review (chapter 1) provides a backdrop to the research, in a number of ways. For example, it highlights that terminology can be an important foundation, when starting a piece of research. It does this through an examination of some of the different ways in which key terms such as sustainable, community and rural have been used in literature. Second, it looks at research conducted on village services, and highlights gaps in current understanding, for example, of the roles of services such as post offices and village shops, and the issue of access to reliable forms of transport. By identifying the village pub in particular as a highly neglected area in social science research this chapter helps contextualise why this service became the topic for this research and how grounded theory became the chosen methodology. The literature

review thus sets the scene to the research and the thesis, stating and justifying why research needs to be conducted on village pubs, and paving the way for the rest of the thesis.

The importance of the theoretical chapter (chapter 3) resides in situating this research, and its contribution, in extant knowledge. It, for example, outlines the different ‘waves’ (i.e. material rurality, the ‘social turn’, and the ‘cultural turn’), and associated studies, developed towards understanding rurality and rural living. In doing this it shows how and why my arguments came to be principally informed by the ‘cultural turn’ and the work of Halfacree (2007). After engaging with various rural study literatures it became clear to me that different elements (locality, social history, individual actors) have an interwoven importance when trying to understand rural spaces, thus meaning it would not be helpful to attach a greater significance to any one element. The work of Halfacree (2007) not only offered support to this argument through its triad of rural space but through this model allowed for an understanding and recognition that the villages featured in this research most closely demonstrated a rural social formation of ‘consuming idylls’. By engaging with rural study literature that explores the lived and imagined representations of the rural (i.e. Cloke, 1994; Bell, 2006; Short, 2006) and pub literature that highlights, through the perspectives of gender and class the negative realities of pub space and experiences I have been able to: first, make sense of, and gain support for, some of my arguments developed in chapters 6 and 7; and second, identify that I am making an original contribution to knowledge by offering an understanding of the multiple representations ascribed to the village pub by rural inhabitants and other connected groups, i.e. village publicans and other local service providers; an area which, until now, has been overlooked.

The historical chapter (chapter 4) is mainly descriptive, with significant flecks of critical thought and analysis running through it. It provides a brief historical background

to the development of the pub and shows that its economic and social importance has, over time, significantly declined. Chapter 4, as with the second half of chapter 3, helps show the realities that surround village pub usage, which can be contrasted with some of the representations rural inhabitants ascribe to the village pub (see chapters 5-8). Thus chapter 4 provides further contextualisation to this research and its contribution to knowledge.

‘Bitter sweet transformations: rural enterprises’ (chapter 5) is the first chapter relating to the emerged core category of ‘adding value’. In this chapter the value that has been explored and interpreted is economic. The majority of participants featured in this research, irrespective of their age, gender or length of residency, whilst acknowledging that there are fewer pubs than there used to be, continue to perceive the village pub as a site of economic importance. In understanding this representation the chapter has three main sections.

The first section looks at the decline in number of village pubs and tries to explain this decline. It acknowledges that pubs are not the only village service to experience such decline, and makes the point that there are possibly some common reasons for this, namely: the rise of supermarkets and their low cost pricing strategies, and greater personal mobility. Looking specifically at the decline in the number of village pubs, this section identifies the following as possible factors: government policies and legislation, e.g. changes in beer duty, the smoking ban, PubCo behaviour and their pursuit of profit, and changes in consumer behaviour, e.g. how they use their disposable income and leisure time. From this section of the economic chapter it can be concluded that there is not just one but rather a number of interrelated reasons for the decline. (This is best shown by Figure 5, chapter 5). It is difficult to ascertain whether one reason carries more weight than any other. Many participants in the research explicitly located the explanation for decline firmly in pricing, and attributed this to the



behaviour of external agencies such as PubCos and supermarkets. It is clear that pricing can influence where people buy and imbibe their alcohol or soft drinks but as chapter 4 showed other factors such as a pub's atmosphere and its accessibility, both to families and geographically, were just as important.

The second and third sections of the economic chapter are interlinked. In the former there is a brief exploration of some of the changes that have taken place in the UK rural economy. This provides context to the discussions in section 3 of the chapter pertaining to the strategies village pubs are using to try and retain their economic viability. Running through sections 2 and 3 of the economic chapter is the idea that the village pub, through trading with other local services, providing employment, and offering a physical space where business networking can take place, is seen by some rural inhabitants and rural publicans as having economic benefits beyond the pub itself and its owners. This added value can be felt locally, regionally and nationally. In this context village pubs are not only an important source of revenue through employment, but also a source of knowledge, where business partnerships can be formed and strengthened and where people can obtain advice regarding local services and tradesmen.

The second findings chapter (chapter 6) explores and interprets the social value of the village pub. It highlights a number of points relating to how rural inhabitants, rural publicans and other rural service providers perceive and experience the village pub. The majority of participants (men and women) featured in this research reported that the contemporary village pub acts a site of social networking for villagers irrespective of their gender, length of residency or social class. Chapter 6, however, shows that not every village resident visits or wants to visit village pubs and those who do, do not always want to engage with others, but instead want to use the pub to gain some personal time and space. It also highlights that it is behaviours such as

drunkenness, as opposed to the pub itself, which some rural residents see as impeding social networking.

Through exploring perceptions and experiences of the village pub, chapter 6 highlights four points. First, that working class and middle class residents use pub space differently. The latter, in contrast to the former, use it as one space to create new friendships which can then be strengthened and maintained beyond pub spaces. Thus this research echoes some of the findings of Hunt and Satterlee (1986a; 1986b) as discussed in chapter 3. Second, length of residency impacts on how some rural residents perceive the social role of pub. The village pub is often seen by newcomer residents as a place of village integration and community engagement. In this context the village pub helps to keep alive the rural idyll as community togetherness. In contrast, long-standing residents see it as being a social lifeline for some people and the only means to maintain their social well-being. Third, and interlinked with the second point, the closure of the pub is perceived by some and experienced by others as resulting in social loss. With regards to those who perceive or experience the pub as a social lifeline the loss relates to a decline in personal social well-being, due to no longer being able to continue their meticulous social routine, leading, on some occasions, to a withdrawal from village life and experiences of social isolation and loneliness. This differs from newcomers who see the village pub as helping keep their ideals of community togetherness alive. In this context the loss is perceived to damage community togetherness and negatively impact on a village's social identity. This, suggests that newcomers perceive the decline as a threat towards their ideals of rural living, namely social and community togetherness. Fourth, as a means to limit the perceived and experienced loss, outlined above, some members of village communities, when their pub has closed or has been threatened with closure, have joined together to try and save it. In some instances this has resulted in success and the pub has remained or reopened but in other villages motivation amongst

community members has waned and ceased to exist, leaving the pub at the mercy of its owners.

Taken together the above four points show that the village pub has been ascribed social importance by rural inhabitants for its ability not only to act as a facilitator of social networking but also to help maintain people's ideals of rural living and community togetherness.

The third findings chapter (chapter 7), on cultural value, discusses many interrelated issues. Often the terms village pub and country pub are used interchangeably but they are different. The chapter makes it clear that, whilst a village pub can be a 'country' pub, in order for it to be labelled as such it needs to have some national significance, e.g. a sign that depicts national history such as the Royal Oak or some national (as opposed to just local) history or heritage attached to it. The chapter, therefore, shows that, when a village pub closes, history and heritage, whether national, local or a mixture of both, can be lost. This is corroborated further in the chapter where discussions highlight that many of the features of the village pub including the sign, irrespective of its name, have history attached to them and closure of the pub results in the erosion of a piece of Britain's history and heritage. In villages such as Heckington, South Lincolnshire, pub closures have resulted in the loss of local as well as national history and heritage. Consequently, many people are less aware of the history around them.

Another discussion raised in chapter 7 links to the concept of a traditional village pub. Although difficult to pin down, this term is often used and in many instances is embedded in images of a 'complete' village and the rural idyll. The chapter shows that the village pub can be both imagined and experienced, and imagination and experience can impact on each other. In general, long-standing residents experience the village pub from a 'realist' perspective albeit, mainly, from yesteryear and are willing to

challenge media images. This is different from how many newcomers perceive and experience it. The chapter suggests that many newcomers buy into the image of the village pub and/or rural living, and in some instances try to make the reality fit with that image. It can, therefore, be concluded, that the rural idyll and representations of a 'complete' village help keep alive the image of the traditional village pub, with its characteristics such as oak furniture, open fire, swinging sign, real ale and home cooked food. These characteristics in turn maintain and reinforce the rural idyll. The chapter highlights that there is a strong belief amongst both newcomers and long-standing residents that if village pubs are to survive they should be traditional in their appearance, demeanour and what they retail. However, some of the features people perceive as traditional were actually established in the late twentieth century, for example, the serving of meals. One conclusion that can be drawn from chapter 7 is that what is being created in villages and marketed as a traditional pub is often a hybrid of the old and the new. Thus it is misleading to label it as a traditional pub, if it is actually a new type of social drinking establishment.

The village pub, as shown throughout chapter 7, is often seen by members of the public as holding iconic significance in the history and culture of England at both national and regional levels. It is also integral to the way in which some rural inhabitants, and members of the public more generally, imagine and experience the rural. Thus, it can be argued that the village pub is adding cultural value to the locality where it is situated and to those who inhabit the rural.

Chapter 8 looks not only at what those at local level, namely communities and publicans, are doing to try and retain village pubs but also what they perceive could be done to aid their sustainability. The main findings throughout this chapter point towards diversification as being the main way forward. The situation, however, is complex. One diversification initiative that has been adopted by village pubs is to locate another

service (e.g. village store, post office) in an existing area of the pub or as an extension to the pub or as a separate building in the grounds of the pub. From the outset this initiative, as shown in chapter 6, is viewed with trepidation by some village residents. However, as shown in many Pub is the Hub case studies, once either the pub or the service that is being proposed to be located in the vicinity of the pub is threatened with closure, the initiative appears to be become accepted by village residents. It can therefore be concluded that village residents, whilst disliking change, recognise that such innovations may be needed to ensure the sustainability of the social, cultural and economic value that pubs provide. The chapter shows that this type of diversification can lead to the retention of village services and as a result can inspire and motivate other communities and publicans to follow suit. There is, therefore, merit in this measure for the sustainability of the village pub. The chapter also shows, however, that some publicans are not convinced that PubCos would be as enthused as them regarding the inclusion of services, such as an on-site microbrewery. This perception may deter some publicans from pursuing this type of diversification. It is, therefore, imperative that other measures are continually considered and adopted if there is to be a reduction and reversal in the decline in number of village pubs.

By making use of several different kinds of change in the way they work, village pubs have a better chance of remaining open. Chapter 8 highlights that practices such as bartering, the serving of food, the serving of real ale, the dissemination of local history, and the locating of another service either as an extension or as a separate building in the pub grounds all have potential in helping to halt the decline in the number of village pubs. There are, however, advantages and disadvantages attached to each of these practices and it is unlikely that any one practice in isolation will be sufficient to sustain the majority of village pubs. Furthermore, the chapter suggests that

without motivation, commitment and determination from publicans and communities then some villages will continue to see a decline in their pubs.

Throughout this thesis, the argument has been made that, from the perceptions and experiences of the rural inhabitants, rural publicans and other rural service providers featured in this research, village pubs matter. In this context they are seen to be aiding the growth of national and regional economies, helping ensure Britain's history and heritage is preserved, enriching the social lives of individuals, and aiding community longevity. The remainder of this chapter will reflect on the main themes of the thesis before concluding.

Different concepts have, as shown throughout this thesis, informed this research. In the literature review (chapter 1) the work of Bourdieu (1986) was introduced. As no clear distinctions could be found between my use of value and Bourdieu's (1986) interpretation of capital (outlined in chapter 1) the decision was taken to use Bourdieu's (1986) ideas to inform my interpretation of value and the discussion (later in this chapter) on the interaction between the identified values. It was value, not capital, which emerged from the processes of data analysis. Through the coding and comparison of data as well as the constant comparison of emerged concepts and categories it became apparent that the participants perceived the village pub as being a beneficial and expanding resource, for villages, village residents and village communities. In other words, they perceive and experience the pub as adding value. Value takes many forms: economic (material or financial), social (networks and connections), and cultural (representations, identities, ideas, practices, attitudes and behaviours of a particular group or society). This thesis has found that pubs add value in all these forms and that this value, in line with Bourdieu (1986), can be self-expanding, and therefore can count as capital.

The village pub, whether through lived experience or imagined ideals, offers different types of resident (long-standing or newcomers) and different groups (village residents, publicans, pub goers and in some instances non-pub goers) the means to achieve a balance between their inner and outer lives. They are able to gain happiness, fulfilment and a sense of purpose from the pub (whether that is through employment, a place of business opportunities, a place to enjoy a drink in the company of others, a place to consume different representations of rurality, or in the case of publicans sustain a living). Different groups perceive and experience the identified values differently. Consequently, they can, whilst recognising the various values, attach different levels of importance to them.

Whilst recognising that village pubs can provide employment and aid local economies it is the social and cultural value that village residents perceive and experience as being important to them. There are, however, differences between different types of resident in relation to how these values are perceived and experienced. Long-standing residents, on the whole, continue to see the village pub through their experiences of the rural during the social formation of productivism. In other words they see the village pub through memory. This memory often reflects a time when industries, such as mining and agriculture dominated, car ownership was low and the process of rural gentrification was, to all intents and purposes, absent. Such memory tends to be tinged with nostalgia and unreflective of rural living in the twenty-first century. Thus whilst they recognise that pub space continues to be divisional they tend to 'gloss over' this, to talk about how the village pub continues to enrich the social lives of some rural inhabitants. The social value, which is conveyed by this type of participant, is that it continues to aid the sustainability of social networks and acts as a social lifeline for some inhabitants. Overall they, as a consequence of their previous experiences and their perception of other inhabitants' experiences, place high social

importance on the pub and make the case that without it their social lives and the social lives of some of their friends and family would be lacking. This view existed amongst different strands of long-standing resident (male, female, pub goers, non-pub goers). This latter group, as well as some long-standing female sporadic pub users, perceived that the pub indirectly allowed them the opportunity to enrich their social lives. In other words, having a less chaotic house (due to predominantly male occupants frequenting the pub) allowed other occupants (e.g. the women of the household) more opportunities to invite family, friends or neighbours round for a social catch-up. From this it becomes clear that, for long-standing residents, the pub acts as a social resource in which they invest their time, leading them to enjoy sustained social networks.

For long-standing residents the cultural value of the pub is underpinned by their perceptions and experiences of the pub as a social resource. The retention of past memories continues to influence how they talk about and experience the village pub today. This thesis has shown that long-standing residents hold selective memories of the pub and whilst they are willing to challenge media portrayals and newcomer ideals (of the village pub and rural living) they do not want to confront the more negative realities (e.g. the decline over time in pubs' social importance - chapter 4, or the continued marginalisation of women in pub spaces - chapter 3) or engage with change which threatens those selective memories. For this type of resident the village pub is important in sustaining personal and local memories and is thus a cultural resource that can be consumed to reminisce and reinforce their perceptions and experiences of yesteryear. On Figure 2 (chapter 2) it was shown that 7 participants classed themselves as former village pub regulars, and they were long-standing residents. The coded data collected from these interviews and the comparing of this data suggested that their decision to stop frequenting was largely influenced by a certain type of change, which they perceived and went on to experience as impacting negatively on their existing memories



of the village pub. This shows the fragility of the village pub and highlights how consideration needs to be given to different types of resident and different types of pub user (e.g. regular, sporadic, and future) when proposing change in order to maximise the sustainability of the establishment.

Village newcomers are also fearful of change. However, unlike long-standing residents, what they are concerned about is change that threatens their ideal image of the village pub, and more generally of rural living. For village newcomers, therefore, the cultural value of the pub is at least as important as its social value, if not more so. The power of the village pub, for this type of resident, lies in its ability to provide different representations of rurality (e.g. pastoral, romantic) as well as conviviality, food, drink and entertainment. In this context the village pub is a cultural resource that village newcomers 'buy' into to reinforce their image of rurality. The actual pub experiences of this type of resident often do not correspond to their ideal, but this does not stop them from continuing to be attached to that ideal. Furthermore, in some instances the lack of, or disappointment with, the village pub can stimulate potential or existing newcomers to invest time and money to change the pub so that it corresponds more closely to their ideal. Consequently, it is clear to see, following Bourdieu's (1986) interpretation of capital, that the cultural value of the pub can produce more cultural value.

In essence the village pub offers newcomers (pub users and non-pub users) the opportunity to engage with their imagined experience of rural living. It is difficult to know the extent to which non-pub going newcomers place importance on the village pub as they, as outlined in chapter 7, only formed a very small part of this research. However, the data that was collected suggests that, in a similar manner to new residents who use the pub, it is the image of rural living, in which the pub is seen as an integral component, that underpins the importance they ascribe to the pub. It can be concluded, therefore, that the village pub evokes the English rural idyll and enables newcomers to

gain happiness and fulfilment from their investment in this idyll. This process of cultural value producing more cultural value appears to be one of the main reasons why the village pub has been ascribed importance by village newcomers.

In chapter 2 the theoretical code: *effects on the village pub of the interaction between economic, social and cultural value* was introduced. In relation to village residents, the three types of value are interrelated and can contribute to the facilitation of one another. This group perceives the interplay between social and cultural value as the most important. Pub going residents invest their time in order to consume a settlement's rurality or social atmosphere and thus gain happiness and fulfilment. They see the economic value produced by the village pub as a by-product of its social and cultural value, which work together to draw in customers, who, once inside, add to all three types of value by engaging in social conviviality and purchasing refreshments. This suggests that the different types of value are commensurable and, in some instances, inter-convertible. The extent to which this occurs, however, is not straightforward and, in the case of village residents, the interaction between the types of value can work to ensure the more negative realities of pub space remain sidelined.

In his work Bourdieu (1992, cited in Webb *et al.*, 2002) shows how symbolic violence is used to reinforce class inequalities. For Bourdieu (1992, cited in Webb *et al.*, 2002:25) symbolic violence is "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity". In this definition violence can include being denied resources, having reduced opportunities to accrue capital or being treated as inferior (Webb *et al.*, 2002). In the case of the village pub we can see how one class has succeeded in helping define the village pub experience, which has been accepted by other classes, helping to not only conceal class inequalities within pub space but aid their continuation. Throughout this thesis it has been shown that the middle class not only use the village pub in a different way from the working class but use their accrued cultural and social

capital to impose their ideals of the rural and rural living onto the village pub, influencing how it is perceived and experienced by others. It is therefore the middle class interpretation of the pub's cultural and social value that becomes seen as the norm as opposed to that of the working class. Round buying is one example of this. The majority of participants in this research saw the village pub as being synonymous with large round buying and expanding social networks. Various studies (e.g. Hunt and Satterlee, 1986b; Hunt 1991; Heley 2008), however, have shown that large round buying has only really been a prominent practice amongst middle class pub goers; suggesting they have succeeded in helping to define what counts as the village pub experience, therefore influencing its cultural value. However, this cultural value does not and cannot be converted into social capital for every pub goer. For example, in order to participate in large round buying pub goers need access to both disposable income and networks but not every village resident, particularly those of the working class, do. Thus, the cultural value of the pub can, in some instances, act to reinforce class inequalities.

All the publicans and service providers featured in this research were also village residents, whether newcomers or long-standing. This group, in contrast to participants who were just village residents, attached high importance to the economic value of the village pub. However, their perceptions of the different types of value differed depending on whether they were new or long-standing residents. The latter publicans had a strong belief that the types of value were commensurable; that is, they saw the pub as a social and cultural resource as much as an economic one and gained personal fulfilment from seeing others profit socially from their investment into social diversification. In contrast, newcomer publicans tended to place a higher importance on the economic value, making the point that without this the village pub could not be sustained and therefore its social and cultural value would be lost. The actions of some

newcomer publicans, however, contradict their verbal stance. For example, some publicans, as highlighted in chapter 7, have renovated their pub to match their imagined ideals, suggesting that they place high importance on the cultural value of the pub to gain happiness, fulfilment and economic value.

Although holding different views, both long-standing and newcomer publicans were willing to consider investing time and/or money into social or cultural diversification. In general, however, the latter type of publican was only willing to pursue these types of diversification if they thought it would lead to an economic return. From this perspective we can see, in line with Bourdieu (1986), that human relations are reduced to relations of money. It is difficult to determine the extent to which the different types of value can be converted into one another. Chapter 5, as well as the examples shown in chapter 8 such as the South Kyme case study, point towards economic value being increased as a result of investment (non-financial, financial, or a mix of both) into the cultural value of the pub. Publicans can, through cultural and social diversification (e.g. offering and promoting regional specialities, the displaying of local history and heritage and/or residents' photographs and memories of their local), further reinforce the realist, pastoral and romantic images of rurality and thus influence affection towards and usage of the village pub. Furthermore, this thesis, and also the work of Heley (2008), shows that, when the established cultural or social value of a particular village pub changes and effects how it is experienced, some core regulars cease to frequent it. Thus, a decline in a pub's cultural or social value can convert into a decline in its economic value. This suggests that the social and cultural value of the pub has a significant role to play in sustaining its economic value. Given the above it would seem that careful investment into the cultural and social value of the village pub can lead to added economic value for the publican, thus helping to sustain the village pub. The agency of publicans can be interpreted as being crucial for the conversion of the

identified values. For example, it is the publicans' belief in and commitment to the diversification methods they are using that helps to produce both more of the same and different types of value. Consequently, it would seem that personal characteristics of the publican play an important role in sustaining village pubs. It was not the purpose of this research to explore this role in depth; therefore, more research is needed. This thesis, however, through exploring and interpreting the values underlying the perceptions and experiences of those who use or are 'connected' to the village pub, indicates that publican attitudes towards different types of diversification can work either to facilitate or inhibit the production and conversion of the different types of value.

It follows from the above discussion that all three types of value are needed if there is to be a halting or reversal in the decline in the number of village pubs. If a publican is preoccupied with the creation of economic value and implements changes (such as a different name, different type of furniture, large screen televisions) that reflect this but does not take into account the other types of value, then this can be to the detriment of all three types of value. For example, some regulars may resent these changes, leading them to attach less social or cultural importance to the village pub. This in turn may mean that they frequent the pub less often, thus reducing its economic value. The decline in the village pub has prompted publicans and communities across the country to continually consider and adopt measures to stimulate the social, cultural and economic value of the village pub. Not all measures will be appropriate or viable for every village pub, and therefore those trying to sustain this establishment need to consider issues such as where the pub is situated geographically and the dominant growth areas in that region's economy, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each measure.

Agriculture and food production are at the heart of the Lincolnshire economy, and publicans in this region have capitalised on this by diversifying into selling food

with an emphasis on the produce being locally sourced – most notably, Lincolnshire sausage and Lincoln red cattle. What is more, cultural diversification, as in the case of the Hume Arms, South Kyme (see chapter 8), has enabled Lincolnshire villages and communities to explicitly foreground their local history, memories and stories of the area and their local. These reflections tend to be nostalgic and, at times, tinted with rose-coloured glasses but they help reinforce the valued pastoral image of rurality. The use of such regional specialities reinforces the village pub's image as one of embeddedness within Lincolnshire rurality.

Village pubs throughout Lincolnshire have experienced other diversification measures including the setting up and running of different clubs (e.g. book clubs, youth clubs) and societies (e.g. history societies, business societies) as well as bartering and the locating of another service within the vicinity of the pub or its grounds. Given the nature of the local economy, these measures are more realistic for the sustainability of Lincolnshire village pubs than measures such as adding a B&B to the premises to accommodate tourists. The clientele of Lincolnshire village pubs comprises mainly local residents rather than tourists, and these residents are more likely to use an additional service, like a baker's, butcher's or post office, or barter. Tourism is not as important in Lincolnshire as in Cumbria, for example. The diversification measures that Lincolnshire publicans use need to be in keeping with the settlement they are situated in and tailored towards the main groups that enter and reside in that settlement. Once a village pub has become well known for its services (e.g. its food or real ale), however, it can find itself attracting tourists. If these go on to form a large proportion of its custom, then publicans may be able to take advantage of other, previously unviable, diversification measures, thus helping to ensure their pub's sustainability.

Not all village pubs, however, are sustainable, despite different types of diversification. At present, there is advice, support and guidance, in the form of the Pub

is the Hub and, more recently, the Pubs Advisory Service (2013), to help those in the fight to sustain the village pub. The latter of these, however, only focuses on giving information to those wanting to take over a pub and does not offer the level of support provided by Pub is the Hub to current publicans. Given the importance of the village pub and the scale of the problem regarding closure rates, there need to be additional, preferably local, services in place to spread the load. This would provide those wanting to sustain their local with extra guidance and support on the diversification measures available to them, as well as on how to implement them. Clearly, the provision of extra support and guidance for publicans and communities is going to cost money but, given the different types of value the village pub provides, dividends including economic are likely to be returned. Given the current economic climate it is probably unrealistic to think that other services would be set up to support the village pub. This is, however, something that communities, publicans and anyone else who has an interest in the village pub could campaign and help raise funds for.

This thesis has shown that different types of resident and different groups (village residents, publicans, other local service providers) have different images of the village pub and, more generally, of rural living. The discussions in this chapter, in particular, suggest that the perceptions and experiences of publicans differ, and in some cases contradict, those of both long-standing and new residents. In chapter 3 a number of contradictions (informed by rural study literature, more specifically that which has engaged with the ‘cultural turn’) between how the rural is remembered or imagined compared to how it ‘really’ is, were identified. The findings of this thesis not only add evidence for the existence of all of these contradictions but also show that some of them exist in relation to the village pub. For example, the thesis has shown that village pubs of today do not always live up to the memories of yesteryear’s pub or the idyllic images of the village pub. Nevertheless, many long-standing residents buy into those memories

and many newcomers (including newcomer publicans) attempt to re-create those images. Consequently, it becomes possible to see:

1. Long-standing residents have a nostalgic memory of how the village pub used to be and this is not how the village pub is now.
2. Newcomers have an image of what the village pub is, or should be, like (e.g. exhibiting community harmony, solidarity, where everyone knows and helps everyone else), which is not how the village pub really is.
3. Long-standing residents have an experience of the village pub, which can contradict the image that newcomers have (of what the village pub is like or should be like).

The village pub, therefore, is an important component not only in the mythologising of the rural but also in facilitating the continuation of the contradictions outlined in chapter 3. Likewise the contradictions outlined in chapter 3 can facilitate those noted above. In other words, perceptions and experiences of the village pub feed into the rural idyll and vice versa. Thus, it becomes clear that the village pub evokes the rural idyll but also, to a degree, relies on the idyll to help sustain its cultural value. The village pub goes further than simply reflecting the idyll. Rather, as a result of being ‘gentrified’ and having a historically established image of being a social space, it offers support to the idea that the rural is a space of, for example, beauty and community togetherness. Thus the village pub reinforces the rural idyll. Some village pubs, however, contradict the idyll, for example, by not having the expected open fire or last order bell. Furthermore, the actual pub experience of many rural inhabitants falls short of the ideal of community togetherness where everyone knows and socialises with everyone else. Nevertheless, some rural inhabitants continue to be attached to their perceptions and do not want to believe or accept how the village pub of today ‘really’ is.



This shows the power of the idyll to shape perceptions and experiences of the village pub and, more generally, rural living.

Myths regarding the rural can arise and be reinforced in a number of ways. They can, for example, come from lived experiences of yesteryear, which have over the decades been elaborated and changed (by the media and those with no lived experience of the rural) to fit ideal rurals. Myths can also arise from an allegory of the rural and rural living. Allegory has been used by various sources (literary, drama, radio) over the years to convey and depict rural living in a specific way (most commonly the pastoral representation - see chapter 7). Allegories are powerful because they can disseminate complex ideas and representations in easily understandable forms. The television drama, *Midsomer Murders*, for example, often plays out key scenes to the backdrop of village fetes, village cricket matches, and inside the village pub. In these examples main characters are seen to be socialising together in an environment that embodies the pastoral and romantic representations of the rural. Many allegories of rural and rural living in dramas such as *Midsomer Murders*, *Heartbeat* and *The Archers* convey the village pub as a place that not only embodies social togetherness but stimulates and satisfies some of the most basic human desires and needs. This shows how the village pub is viewed with affection by English people.

The rural idyll is maintained and reinforced in two ways. First, through the news media as well as literature, radio, and television dramas. Tabloid, broadsheet, radio and television news reports (local and national) have typically and continually depicted village life as being in decline if it does not conform to the pastoral representation of the countryside and the idea of rural living as encompassing social togetherness. Second, through rural 'improvement' to re-create the rural idyll. Publican 'gentrifiers', in particular, reinforce the myth of the rural and rural living that is conveyed by pastoral and romantic representations. From this thesis, and in particular the discussions raised

in this chapter and chapter 7, it can be concluded that the village pub and countryside are being continually re-created as idyllic.

To conclude, this thesis addresses a gap in our knowledge on an important rural service, which has traditionally been neglected by the academic community. It contributes to rural studies literature generally, and more specifically, to that which engages with the cultural turn, as well as to pub literature, which has in general overlooked the village pub. The thesis looks at the representations and experiences of the village pub from the perspectives of rural residents (mainly but not exclusively pub goers), local service providers, publicans and associated actors (i.e. a CAMRA and a local brewery representative) and provides an in-depth exploration and interpretation of the types of value (economic, social and cultural) that underpin these multiple representations. It draws conceptually on Halfacree's (2006, 2007) triad of rural space to support my interpretation of the rural, as being a space that is made up of different but interwoven and equally important elements, and to explore the tensions between the different elements in the villages where data was collected. The work of Halfacree (2007) thus provides the context to my research findings and helps (along with other, more general, rural 'cultural turn', and pub specific literature) situate the thesis in extant knowledge.

In looking at the representations and experiences of the village pub this thesis distinguishes between country and village pubs and highlights contradictions between how the village pub is remembered or imagined and how it 'really' is. Furthermore, it shows that the importance of the village pub, particularly for village residents, resides, in part, in its ability to provide different representations of rurality (realist, pastoral, romantic). By offering these representations and the prospect of social togetherness village pubs provide customers with an attractive image and experience of the village pub and, more generally, of rural living. Consequently, rural inhabitants and connected

actors ascribe social, cultural and economic importance to the village pub. The thesis shows that the three identified types of value (economic, social and cultural) can be self-expanding and inter-convertible. Thus, they can work, in the Bourdieusian interpretation, as capital. For Bourdieu, economic, social and cultural capital are all self-expanding and mutually reinforcing. This thesis, however, shows that this is not always the case for the three types of value identified in relation to the village pub. Indeed, the different types of value can also work to undermine one another and thus contribute to village pubs being unsustainable (see below). This is an important finding, which adds to our understanding of how the different forms of capital can relate to one another. It allows us to see that the values can work in different ways and that these different ways can have different but also similar (e.g. reinforcing class inequalities) consequences.

In addition to providing a contribution to knowledge this thesis offers a contribution to practice. It does this through imparting knowledge to different groups (communities, publicans and members of the general public) on the types of diversification methods that can be used to sustain village pubs. The thesis shows that the village pub is seen and experienced in three distinct but interdependent ways and thus has an importance that goes beyond financial benefit for owners. By providing examples of the different types (economic, social and cultural) of diversification and offering suggestions on what can realistically be achieved, especially for village pubs in the county of Lincolnshire, this thesis offers those who are wanting to sustain their village pub some options they could consider. This thesis, however, also shows that not all village pubs are sustainable, and that over time there has been a decline in their economic, social and cultural importance. Furthermore, it highlights that an over emphasis on the creation of economic profit and/or an overlooking of the social and cultural value can contribute to the values working against one another. By highlighting this, the thesis imparts knowledge to publicans on how attitudes and behaviours towards

the identified types of value can contribute to a village pub being either sustainable or unsustainable.

This thesis is exploratory in that it brings the topic of the village pub into the social science sphere and, as outlined above, provides contributions to knowledge and practice and offers suggestions of where additional research on this topic can be carried out. For example, in chapter 7 it is shown that additional research looking at the perceptions of non-pub goers towards the village pub is merited to allow for an in-depth comparison between pub goers and non-pub goers that would further extend our knowledge of the pub in the rural community. Furthermore, as shown in this chapter, additional research looking specifically at how the personal characteristics of publicans actually impact on the different types of value would further our knowledge of the sustainability of village pubs. Other topics emerged for possible future research. For example, it became apparent that the majority of participants attached cultural importance to not only the village pub but also the village shop and/or post office. As shown throughout chapter 7, many participants saw the village pub and post office as two distinct services but as similar in terms of cultural importance. Little research, however, has focussed on the cultural importance of either the village post office or shop and our knowledge of and practices towards sustaining rural spaces would benefit greatly from understanding the cultural importance of these services. This topic area would, in a similar manner to this research, be timely. For example, there continues to be a decline in the number of post offices and village shops across the country, of which the cultural impact remains unknown. Furthermore, since the privatisation of Royal Mail some villages are now being served by plain white postal vans. Royal Mail and the Post Office are separate companies but research on the cultural importance of the village post office would help us to understand if rural inhabitants see this or if they see

them as mutually reinforcing each other's cultural importance, thus affecting perceptions and experiences of rural living when one changes.

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## Appendix 1: The Pub in the Rural Community (aide-memoire)

### Schedule of questions for phase one of data collection

Responses to these questions will be treated confidentially and no details will be passed on to third parties. Furthermore, all data will be anonymised thus ensuring that no participant can be identified.

#### *1. Personal details*

- Name
- What area are you from (e.g. village/town name)?
- How long have you been visiting this pub?
- What other rural pubs do you visit?
- How often do you visit those rural pubs?

Tailor towards publicans when interviewing this group

#### *2. Pub in village life*

- In your experience what sort of people, in terms of age and gender, frequent rural pubs the most?
- In your view, how has the pub traditionally fitted into village life?
- What do you think pubs provide to rural communities?
- Do you think new friends can be gained by visiting other rural pubs?
- Do you think village pubs provide enough facilities such as a notice board, pool table, darts board, juke box, games machine? If no, why not?
- Do you think rural pubs visit run enough events such as quiz nights, dart competitions, pool competitions?
- If so, what do you believe these events bring to rural communities?
- If not, what other events would you like to see?

#### *3. Questions about the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas*

- Do you agree that there has been a decline in the number of pubs in rural areas?

- What do you believe are the main factors behind the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas?
- In what way, do you think the drink/drive laws (1967) impacted on rural pubs?
- In what ways, do you think, the smoking ban (implemented 2007) has impacted on rural pubs?
- In your view does poor public transport in rural areas have implications for rural pubs?
- If so, what are those implications?
- What effects, in your opinion, has the rising beer duty had on rural pubs?
- What repercussions, if any, has supermarket competition had on rural pubs?
- Do you know what a PubCo is? (if not need to explain)
- In your opinion how does the behaviour of PubCos impact on rural pubs?

4. *Questions about the impact of the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas on rural communities*

- In your view how would/does the closure of a pub affect rural communities?
- In your view how would/does the closure of a rural pub affect the character of a village?
- Do you think the closure of rural pubs has a knock-on effect on other rural services?
- If so what do you think the knock-on effect is?
- In your view how would/does the closure of a rural pub impact on the local economy?
- Do you think the closure of rural pubs is damaging to society's image of the English village?
- If so, in what ways do you think it is damaging?

5. *Questions about halting the decline in the number pubs in rural areas*

- Do you think the Government is doing enough to support rural pubs?
- If not, what more could it do?
- In your view could /should the relationship between PubCos and pubs, particularly rural, change? If so, in what ways?

- Do you think that serving food is an essential ingredient for the survival of the rural pub? If so, why? If not, why not?
- What are your views on diversification - particularly the letting of rooms, the selling of real ale - as a way to try and ensure the survival of the rural pub?
- Do you know what is meant by joint provision of services? (if not need to explain)
- How do you feel about joint provision of services as a means to try and ensure the survival of the rural pub?

Thank participants for agreeing to take part in this study on the pub in the rural community. Your responses have been highly valued.

## Appendix 2: Letter sent out to publicans

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

February 2010

Dear Sir/Madam, (pub name)

Subject: University study looking at the public house in the rural community

I am a postgraduate research student from the University of Lincoln. I am currently researching my PhD on the public house in the rural community. The purpose of my study is to explore the importance of the village pub from the perspectives of those who reside or work in the rural. In doing this it will look at how the public house has traditionally fitted into village life, how the public house fits into contemporary village life, and what the decline in number of village pubs means for rural communities and villages. In order to fulfil this study I need to talk to a variety of individuals including publicans; thus, I was wondering if you would be willing to take part? The interview would last in the region of 30- 60 minutes. Furthermore, it would take place at your convenience and an interview guide could, if you wished, be forwarded to you in advance. Any information given will be treated confidentially

I would be grateful if you could fill in the enclosed slip and sent it back to me indicating whether or not you would be interested in taking part in the study. I enclose a self-addressed envelope. Alternatively you can contact me by email at [REDACTED] or by my work mobile on [REDACTED]

Yours Faithfully

Claire Louise Markham

## Appendix 3: Project leaflet



### The public house in the rural community

This leaflet provides a brief overview of my project including its purpose, how data will be collected as well as used and contact details.

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the public house in the rural community from the perspectives of those who reside or work in the rural. In doing this it will look at how the public house has traditionally fitted into village life, how the public house fits into contemporary village life, and what the decline in number of village pubs means for rural communities and villages.

#### **Data Collection and usage:**

The fieldwork will involve gathering data from participants on their local experiences, memories and recollections of the village pub and rural living.

The working data collection methods will be semi-structured interviews where notes will be taken by the researcher. These notes will be taken with the aid of a netbook.

Collected and analysed data will be used in reports and papers including my Ph.D. thesis. All data will be treated confidently, anonymised and stored securely. All participants will be required to sign a research consent form detailing the outline of the project as well as how data will be used.

You are able to withdraw from the research at any time by contacting the researcher on the contact details outlined below.

#### **Contact Details:**

For more information or to participate in the research please feel free to contact Miss Claire Markham at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED]

## Appendix 4: Village chart

<u>Interview Number &amp; Village Name</u>	<u>Type of Participant</u>	<u>Type of Residency</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>	<u>Where the Interview Took Place</u>
1) CAMRA	CAMRA Representative	N/A	Male	8/02/10	Telephone
2) Helpringham	Former Publican (in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century) Helpringham	Long- standing	Male	15/02/10	Nags Head Pub Helpringham
3) Helpringham	Village Residents	Long- standing	Joint interview mother (female) and son (male)	29/04/10	Participants House
4) Helpringham (Follow –up Interview from interview number 2)	Former Publican (in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century) Helpringham	Long- standing	Male	30/04/10	Nags Head Pub Helpringham
5) Helpringham	Local Service Provider (if quoted wanted to be known as village resident)	Long- standing	Male	1/05/10	Participants House
6) Heckington	Former Publican Heckington Also a former local service provider (recorded on Figure 1 as Publican)	Long- standing	Female	17/05/10	Local Pub, Heckington



7) Heckington	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	18/05/10	Heckington Tearooms
8) Swaton	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	20/05/10	Local Coffee Shop Swaton
9) Billingborough	Local Service Provider (if quoted wanted to be known as village resident)	Newcomer	Male	29/05/10	George and Dragon Pub, Billingbrough
10) Billingborough	Local Service Provider (if quoted wanted to be known as village resident)	Newcomer	Female	29/05/10	George and Dragon Pub, Billingbrough
11) North Kyme	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	5/06/10	Coffee Shop, Sleaford
12) Ruskington	Village Resident	Newcomer	Male	14/06/10	The Black Bull Pub, Ruskington
13) Great Hale	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	22/06/10	Heckington Tearooms
14) Thorpe Latimer	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	9/07/10	Coffee Shop, Swaton
15) Horbling	Former Publican Horbling	Newcomer	Male	13/07/10	The Plough Inn Pub, Horbing
16) Quadring	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	14/07/10	Birchgrove Garden Centre Coffee House

17) Navenby	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	22/07/10	Lion and Royal Pub, Navenby
18) Bicker	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	23/07/10	Participants Place of Work
19) Ruskington	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	30/7/10	Coffee Shop, Ruskington
20) Burton Pedwardine	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	1/08/10	Coffee Shop Sleaford
21) Waddington	Village Resident	Newcomer	Male	8/08/10	The Horse and Jockey Pub, Waddington
22) Quadring	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	8/09/10	The Black Bull Pub, Donington
23) South Kyme	Former Publican South Kyme	Newcomer	Male	10/09/10	The Hume Arms Pub, South Kyme
24) Donington	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	13/09/10	Participants Place of Work
25) North Kyme	Former Publican (undisclosed village)	Long-standing	Male	16/09/10	Plough Inn Pub, North Kyme
26) South Kyme	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	12/10/10 Interview postponed 35 minutes in, recommended 4/01/2011	Participants House

27) Navenby	Local Service Provider also Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	17/10/10	Participants Business Premises
28) Helpringham	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	19/10/10	Participants House
29) Kirby La Thorpe	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	20/10/10	Coffee Shop, Sleaford
30) Billingborough	Former Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	21/10/10	Fortesque Arms Pub, Billingborough
31) Little Hale	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	24/10/10	The Oak Pub, Heckington
32) Leasingham	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	26/10/10	Duke of Wellington Pub, Leasingham
33) Helpringham	Village Resident and Local Historian	Long-standing	Male	29/10/10	Helpringham Village Hall
34) Swaton	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	12/11/10	Coffee Shop, Swaton
35) Wellingore	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	13/11/10	Red Lion Pub, Wellingore
36) Billinghay	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	15/11/10	The Hume Arms, South Kyme
37) Folkingham	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	24/11/10	Participants Place of Work

38) Great Hale	Former Publican (20 <sup>th</sup> Century) Great Hale	Long- standing	Male	27/11/10	The Nags Head Pub, Heckington
39) Keal Cotes	Former Publican, Keal Cotes	Newcomer	Male	28/11/10	Neighbouring Village Pub
40) Billingham	Village Resident	Newcomer	Male	4/12/10	The Golden Cross Pub, Billingham
41) Swaton	Village Residents	Long- standing	Joint interview granddad (male) and grandson (male)	10/12/10	Participants House
42) Great Hale	Village Resident	Long- standing	Male	22/12/10	Nags Head Pub, Heckington
43) Ruskington	Village Resident	Long- standing	Male	3/01/11	The Back Bull Pub, Ruskington
44) Navenby	Former Publican Navenby	Newcomer	Male	15/01/11	Red Lion Pub Wellingore
45) Great Hale	Village Resident	Long- standing	Female	16/01/11	Nags Head Pub, Heckington
46) North Kyme	Village Resident	Newcomer	Male	17/01/11	The Plough Inn Pub, North Kyme
47) Heckington	Former Publican Heckington	Newcomer	Male	19/01/11	Coffee Shop in Sleaford

48) Helpringham	Former Publican (21 <sup>st</sup> Century) of Nags Head, Helpringham	Newcomer	Male	1/02/11	The Oak Pub, Heckington
49) Helpringham	Former Publican (21 <sup>st</sup> Century) of Nags Head, Helpringham	Newcomer	Female	2/02/11	Heckington Tearooms
50) Navenby	Local Service Provider also Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	4/02/11	Navenby Tearooms
51) Leasingham	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	6/02/11	Coffee shop, Sleaford
52) Helpringham	Village resident	Long-standing	Male	16/02/11	Participants House
53) Heckington	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	21/03/11	Nags Head pub, Heckington
54) North Kyme	Village Resident	Newcomer	Male	31/03/11	The Hume Arms pub, South Kyme
55) Wellingore	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	10/04/11	The Red Lion pub, Wellingore
56) South Kyme	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	19/04/11	Participants House
57) Heckington	Village Resident	Long-Standing	Male	15/06/11	Nags Head pub, Heckington
58) Metherringham	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	2/07/11	The Star and Garter Pub, Metherringham

59) Navenby	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	18/08/11	The Lion and Royal Pub, Navenby
60) Bardney	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	13/09/11	Coffee shop Lincoln
61) Billinghay	Village Resident	Newcomer	Female	4/01/12	Coffee Shop, Sleaford
62) Great Hale	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	6/01/12	Heckington, Tearooms
63) Ruskington	Village Resident	Long-standing	Female	9/01/12	Coffee shop, Ruskington
64) Wainfleet	Batemans Representative	N/A	Male	19/02/13	Batemans Brewery, Wainfleet
65) Heckington	Village Resident	Long-standing	Male	09/04/13 (follow up interview)	Nags Head Pub, Heckington
66) Anonymous	Publican	Newcomer	Female	14/04/13	Local Pub

<u>Key</u>	<u>Code</u>
Highlighted in yellow	Interviews conducted after the 'core category' had emerged
Highlighted in green	The additional two interviews that took place to gain reaction to the 2013 budget measures namely the penny a pint' tax reduction.

## Appendix 5: The Pub in the Rural Community (aide-memoire – reworked)

Tell participants responses to these questions will be treated confidentially and no details will be passed on to third parties. Furthermore, all data will be anonymised thus ensuring that no participant can be identified.

### *1. Personal details*

- Name
- What area are you from (e.g. village/town name)?
- How long have you lived in that area?

### *2. Pub in village life*

- In your opinion what sort of people, in terms of age and gender, frequent rural pubs the most?

PAST

PRESENT

- In your view, how has the pub traditionally fitted into village life?
- What do you think pubs provide to rural communities?
- Do you like to see pubs in villages? If so why? If not why not?
- Do you like to see village pubs with traditional names? If so why? If not why not?
- Do you think a village pubs name is an indicator of what it has to offer? If so why? If not why not?

### *3. Questions about the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas*

- Do you agree that there has been a decline in the number of pubs in rural areas?

- What do you believe are the main factors behind the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas?

4. *Questions about the impact of the decline in the number of pubs in rural areas on rural communities*

- In your view how would/does the closure of a pub affect rural communities?
- Do you think the closure of one rural service has a knock on-effect on other rural services? If so what do you think the knock-on effect is?

5. *Questions about halting the decline in the number pubs in rural areas*

- What are your views on diversification (prompt example if needed) as a way to try and ensure the survival of the rural pub?
- How do you feel about joint provision of services (prompt example if needed e.g. the placing of one service such as the Post Office in another service e.g. the pub) as a means to try and ensure the survival of the rural pub?

Thank participant for agreeing to take part in this study.



## Appendix 6: Copy of the participant consent form

### The public house in the rural community

The purpose of this study is to find out how the public house has traditionally fitted into village life, how the public house fits into contemporary village life, why there has been a decline in the number of public houses in rural areas, what this decline in number means for rural communities and what measures could/should be introduced to halt this decline in the number of rural public houses.

Data once collected and analysed will be used in reports including my PhD thesis however no participant will be identified either directly or indirectly. Consequently information you provide will be treated confidentially and all identifiable information will be anonymised. You can withdraw from this research project at any given time.

Data will be collected by interviews. The interviewer will take notes. All data will be analysed and stored in a secure place

If you have any queries or concerns regarding this project you can contact me either by email at [REDACTED] or by post at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Signature ..... Date .....